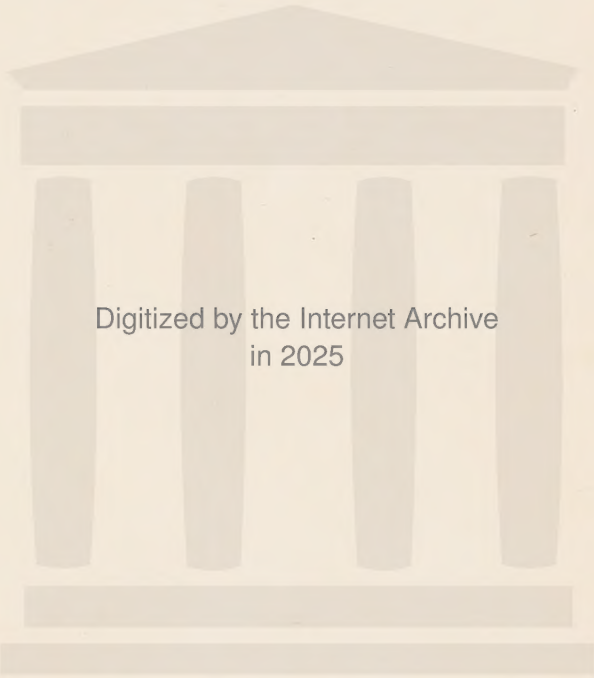




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THE BIT O' WRITIN'

AND OTHER TALES.

VOL. II.

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THE
BIT O' WRITIN'

AND
OTHER TALES.

BY
THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE HARE-HOUND

AND

THE WITCH.

THE HARE-HOUND

AND

THE WITCH.

YOUR genuine witches, who

——“ seemed not creatures of the earth,

And still were on it ;”—

withered old women, who united in their persons the decrepitude of age with the most marvellous powers of locomotion ; half spirits, half mortals ; who seemed to live solely for the purpose of paying back to the whole human race the hatred lavished by men, women, and children, on themselves : who could blight the

farmer's hope of plenty ; cheat his cows of their milk, and his wife of her butter ; cause the clouds to gather, and the tempest to scourge the earth ; and yet, creatures of contrarities ! who, possessed of all this awful power, could not, or would not, redeem themselves from rags, hunger, and misery ;—they, your genuine witches, as we have already called them, exist not, alas ! at present, in our green island : extinct, though not forgotten, is their race, like that of our noble moose-deer, our formidable wolf, and our as formidable wolf-dog. Degenerate emulators of them, indeed, we still boast ; individuals who dip into futurity by the aid of card-cutting or cup-tossing, or who find out stolen property, or vend charms against the peevish malice of the little sprites of the moonbeam ; but, compared with their renowned predecessors, these timid assertors of supernatural endowment may be said to disgrace their calling ; and, moreover, even they are fast sinking in repute, as well as diminishing in numbers.

But we would attempt to preserve, in the following pages, some fit idea of the importance of a true Irish witch of the good olden time. We are aware, that the chief event which must wind up our story—the sudden appearance, namely, of a lost heir—(we *have* the courage to speak it out, so soon)—is a threadbare one; it can't be helped, however; and it, at least, is fact, to our own knowledge; although we are not quite as fully accountable for the respectable traditions that surround it with such pleasing wonders as we are about to relate, and which form the real interest of our narration.

On the western coast of Ireland is a certain dangerous bay: into it the broad Atlantic rolls his vast waters. Two leagues inland from its mouth, high black cliffs frown over it, at both sides, of which the bases are hollowed into caverns; and when the winds blow angrily — and any wind can effectually visit the open and exposed estuary—tremendous and ter-

rific is the roar, the dash, and the foam, which deafen the ears, and distract the eyes of a spectator. That hapless vessel which, in a storm, cannot avoid an entrance into this merciless turmoil of mad waters, has sealed its doom.

Formerly, a great number of ships, from different countries, used to be dashed to splinters against the iron-bound coast; and a few people conjecture that the diminution of such terrible accidents, in the present day, is partially owing to some improvement in seamanship, or else to the timely warning now given to distant mariners, by lights erected at the mouth of the bay. But other persons, and by far the greater number, in the neighbourhood, think that the comparative paucity of wrecks may more naturally and satisfactorily be accounted for in another way. In fact, there does not now reside, as formerly there did, in an almost unapproachable cavern, high up on the face of one of the black cliffs, “a real witch, of the right sort.”

Not that her witchship always dwelt in her cave; no, her visits to it were but occasional. Nor did it ever become necessary for her to proclaim her presence on the coast, by exhibiting her person; the results of her close neighbourhood sufficiently “prated of her whereabouts.” Farmers’ wives toiled in vain at their churns; and when no butter would come, self-evident it was that the witch was at that moment in her cavern, seated on her heels before a vessel of plain water, from which, by drawing a dead man’s hand through it, she appropriated the produce of other people’s honest labour. Cows suddenly went back in their milk; and then it was known, that, by passing a wheaten straw between her finger and thumb, the witch amply filled her pail, while the owner of the beautiful animal uselessly wrought at its udder. Cattle swelled, and died, too; and, once again, every one knew who was in the cave under the cliff; and if none of those events, or similar ones,

proved her disagreeable proximity, the direful storms and the frightful wrecks in the bay abundantly warranted it. Often, amid the bellying of the tempest she had raised, swelled her shrieking voice; and while the despairing creatures in the doomed vessel topped each short, high, foam-maned billow, which nearer and nearer dashed them on to their dread fate, the terrified watchers on the cliff's brow have heard her devilish laugh, until at last it broke into frenzied loudness, as the ship burst, like a glass bubble, against the sharp rocks under her dwelling-hole.

No one could tell whence she came, or when, for a time, no longer visible on the coast, whither she went. Occasionally she was observed in conference with certain notorious smugglers: and the men appeared, it was well known, to petition and bribe her for a fair wind with which to enter the bay, and for a foul one to keep their pursuers out of it. And this was fully proved by the fact, that invariably their

light lugger got in, and was safely moored in some little creek, against danger of coming storm; while, the moment the revenue-cutter appeared in the offing, out burst the wildest winds, from the witch's cavern, and up swelled the sea and the bay, in mountain billows; and his Majesty's vessel was sure to be wrecked during the night.

Like all of her sisterhood of that famous period, she could change herself, at pleasure, into various shapes. We give a serious proof of her talent in this respect.

A few miles from the coast which she so despotically ruled, resided a considerable landed proprietor. A great hunter of hares and foxes was he. His wife had just blessed him with an heir to his estate, and the boy was their only child. Of this event, the good squire was not a little proud; for, in case of his not leaving male issue, his property was to pass away to a distant, obscure, and neglected relation, whom its immediate possessor neither

loved nor liked; for the heir-presumptive was mean in his habits and associations, uneducated and graceless; and it would be a sad thing to know that the fine old family acres were to go into such hands.

Shortly after his wife's confinement, and while she and her baby were "doing well," the squire, to dissipate the recent anxiety he had suffered, sallied forth for a hunting. His pack of harriers were his attendants, on this occasion, for the hare was the object of the day's sport.

And, surely, never had such a hare been followed by dogs, or "sohoed" by mortal lips, as the hare, he, and his friends and pack started, and hunted, upon that memorable day. From breakfast to dinner time, a sweeping and erratic chase did she lead them all; the dogs at full stretch, and the horses at top speed. Various accidents happened to the sportsmen; one maimed his steed; another fractured his collar-bone; some swampd in bogs; and none,

except our good squire and his huntsman, escaped without injury or disaster. But, from starting to pulling up, they gallantly kept at the dogs' tails.

After "an unprecedented run," the hare suddenly scudded towards the cliffs of the bay, immediately over the witch's cavern. The good harriers pursued: and the eager squire did not stay behind them; his huntsman closely following. The hare gained the verge of the cliff. Sheela, the prime bitch of the pack, just had time to close her, make a chop at her, and take a mouthful of flesh from her haunch, before she leaped down the face of almost a precipice. Dogs and horsemen were at a pause; none dared follow her.

In some time, nearly all the other discomfited members of the hunt came up, soiled, wounded, or jaded. They heard of the termination of the chase; and all wondered at the extraordinary freaks of the little animal, which had so distressed and baffled the best harriers

and the best hunters in the county, taking men and horses together.

“By —— !” suddenly exclaimed the huntsman, a young fellow of known hardihood of character, swearing a great oath, “I’ll tell yez how it is ! ye are afther huntin’ the witch o’ the cave sthraight undher us ! It isn’t the first time that creatures like her have made a laugh, in this way, of nearly as ‘good men as we all are, standin’ here together.”

Most of his auditors ridiculed the speaker ; one or two, however, looked grave : perhaps in patronage of his assertions ; perhaps because the pains and aches resulting from their many falls, during the day, lengthened their faces, darkened their brows, and puckered their lips. The huntsman offered, if any one would accompany him on the dangerous enterprise, to scale down the cliff, penetrate the witch’s cavern, and prove his saying. One did volunteer to be his companion : an humble friend of his own, forming an individual of the

crowd of gaping peasants assembled round the gentlemen hunters.

The adventurers succeeded in reaching and entering the awful cave. Upon their return, over the line of the cliff, they reported that they had found the witch at home, stretched, panting, and exhausted, upon some straw, in a dark corner of the cave ; that they had dragged her, much against her will (and indeed her screams certainly had reached the squire and his friends above) to the light, at its opening ; had, with main force, examined her person ; and, sure enough, had found a deficiency of flesh in her haunch, with plainly the marks of Sheela's teeth in and about the wound, from which the blood freshly streamed. To be sure, the better informed of the hearers of this story, or at least a majority of them, still laughed at it ; but whatever they might think, those to whom the talents and capabilities of witches were better known, firmly believed that the squire and his companions had hunted all

that day, a hare, which was no hare, after all: and that the courageous little Sheela had tasted flesh of a forbidden kind.

And happy had it been for the squire and his pet bitch had they proved less eager after their sport. Poor Sheela died in great agonies upon the very night of that day, and her master was doomed to a speedy punishment for his own audacity.

Nothing daunted at the idea of whom he had been hunting, he took the field again a few days after; and now no question could be raised as to the nature of the game he a second time started and pursued. Puss did not, indeed, immediately make for the sea; but this was only a ruse to effect her own malignant purposes. She wanted to get her enemy alone at the edge of the cliff. And for this purpose, her speed and her manners quite outdid those of a former day: so much so, that, in a few hours, even the dare-neck and dare-devil huntsman was thrown out, and

returned with a lamed horse and a sprained ankle to the gentleman who had suffered before him, leaving the squire alone close upon the dogs.

For a considerable time he and his master's friends awaited the re-appearance of the persevering Nimrod. Finally, they repaired to the cliff, which the huntsman had left him speedily approaching. There they found his horse without a rider; but himself they never again beheld. The unbelievers in witchcraft immediately surmised that his high-blooded hunter had borne him against his will to the edge of the cliff; had there suddenly started back; and that, by the quick and violent action, the unhappy gentleman had been thrown forward out of his saddle, and precipitated from rock to rock hundreds of feet downward. A few who were able for the effort, cautiously descended towards the sea. On their way they discovered their friend's hunting-cap on the sharp pinnacle of a rock; its iron headpiece was stove in; and

it became evident that, after having been loosed from its wearer, by the force of the concussion which had fractured it, the squire's body had tumbled still farther downward. They reached the sea's level. His remains were not visible; they must have fallen into the sea, and been floated away by its tide. The witch of the cavern disappeared with her victim,—her victims, we should say: for her vengeance on the squire was not limited to his own destruction. At the story of his shocking death, hastily and injudiciously communicated, his wife, yet enfeebled by her recent confinement, sickened, and in a few days died; nay, nearly within the hour of her departure from this world, her only child, the heir to her husband's estate, disappeared; no one could tell whither or by what means. Strange enough to say, however, part of the baby's dress was found on the identical pinnacle of rock where his father's hunting-cap had been met with; and, in the minds of the educated and wealthy of the neighbourhood, this circum-

stance started doubts of fair-dealing towards father and child. Suspicion, however, could fasten itself upon no object; and inquiry and investigation did not lead to any solution of the mystery. It need not be added, that by far the greater number of the population of the district smiled at the useless efforts to establish a case of human, that is, ordinarily human agency: or that they went on tranquilly believing that the squire and his family, not forgetting his bitch, had been punished for the mouthful snatched by young Sheela from the haunch of a certain person.

Twenty years after the time of the tragedy we have detailed, our story is resumed. The once indigent and despised relation, of whom mention has before been made, sits at his breakfast-table in the old family house. He is in his forty-fifth year. Like other gentlemen of his day, he carries in his hair the contents of a large pomatum-pot; four tiers of curls rise over

his ears ; on the top of his head is a huge *toupée*, and a great *queue* lolls, like an ox's tongue, between his broad shoulders. On his loose, wide-sleeved, long-skirted, frock-like coat, is a profusion of gold embroidery : a lace cravat coils round his throat ; ruffles flaunt over his knuckles ; his gaudy waistcoat reaches only to his knees ; and satin are his breeches, and silk his hose, and ponderous square silver buckles are in his shoes. So much for the outside of the jocular Squire Hogan. As to his interior pretensions, and, indeed, some of his external ones, too, the least said the soonest mended. He had never been able to raise himself above much of the homely acquisitions of his youth ; but though we cannot present to the reader, in his person, the model of the true Irish gentleman of his day, we do introduce him in the character of—(to repeat what every one said of him) —“ as worthy a soul as ever broke the world's bread.”

Squire Hogan, upon the morning when we meet him, paid earnest attention to his break-

fast. Cold roast beef often filled his plate, and as often rapidly disappeared. And yet something seemed to gratify his mental palate as well as his corporeal one. A gleeish, self-contented smile played over his round, ruddy face; his small blue eyes glittered; and, to the accompaniment of a short, liquorish laugh, occasionally were drawn up at the corners, as he glanced at his daughter, a good-natured, good-tempered, sensible, and (of course) beautiful girl of nineteen, who sat opposite to him, sipping her coffee and picking her muffins. And, whenever their eyes met, well did Catherine know that the chuckling of her papa had reference to some little triumph which, as he believed, he had cleverly and cunningly achieved over herself. At length the good squire relaxed in his meal; emptied the silver tankard of October which lay at his hand; leaned back in his chair, and laughingly said, "By Jove, Kate, my girl, I nicked you there!"

"Indeed, papa, you played me a roguish

turn," assented Kate, convinced, from experience, that it was very pleasant to her parent to have the talent of his practical jokes fully admitted.

"Where did I tell you we were driving to, out of Dublin town, eh?"

"You told me, sir, with as serious a face as you could make, that we were only going to visit a friend, a few miles out of Dublin."

"Ho, ho! Good, by Cork! Choice! a capital hoax, as I'm a living sinner! and I told you this confounded lie, with such a serious face, you say?"

"With such a mock-serious face, I meant to say, papa."

"Right, Kate! you are right, beyond yea and nay: a *mock*-serious face; yes, and there lay the best of it; if I had not been able to keep myself from laughing, you might have suspected something; but I *was* able, as you yourself saw, and as you now don't deny; though, by Jove, Kate, it was enough to make a dead man

shout out, seeing you sitting opposite to me, and believing every word I told you !”

“ You kept up the farce cleverly, I must and do admit it, sir.”

“ Didn’t I, Kate, didn’t I ? And here we are, this morning, eighty miles from Dublin, in our own house, and taxing no man’s hospitality. But, devil’s in it ! there’s no fun in playing a good trick on you, Kate.”

“ Why so, dear papa ? am I not as easily blinded as your heart could wish ?”

“ To be sure you are ! What else could you be ? I never met man, woman, nor child, that I could not puzzle. That’s not the thing at all. No ; but succeed as I may with you, ’tis impossible to make you a little cross. Why, if I had a lass of spirit to deal with, there would be no end to her tears, and her pouts, and her petitions, the moment she found that I was whisking her away from her balls, and her drums, and her beaux, and all the other dear delights of Dublin.”

“ And I hope that my merry papa does not really wish to have me peevish and short-tempered, even for a greater provocation ?”

“ Kiss me, Kate ; I believe not ; and yet I don’t know, either, by Cork ! There would be fun in tormenting you a bit, in a harmless way. But, Kate, can you give a guess why I ran away with you in such a devil of a hurry ?”

“ Let me see, papa. I remember you telling me of some original matches you had on hands, here, before we set out for Dublin. Perhaps you have engaged the two cripples to run a race on their crutches ?”

“ No ; that’s put off—ho, ho !”

“ Or the two old women to hop against time, carrying weight for age ?”

“ Ho, ho ! wrong again !”

“ Probably you have succeeded in making the two schoolmasters promise to fight out their battle of the squares and angles with their respective birches ; their scholars standing by to show fair play ?”

“ Ho, ho, ho ! No ; though that’s a matter not to be let slip out of reach, neither.”

“ Then all my guesses are out, papa.”

“ I’ll help you, then. Tell me, you little baggage, what is it on earth you most wish for ?”

“ Indeed, my dear papa, I have no particular wish to gratify, at the present moment.”

“ Get out ! get out, for a young hypocrite ! Kate, wouldn’t something like a husband be agreeable to you ?”

The girl blushed the colour of a certain young gentleman’s coat, and drooped her head. Of that certain young gentleman, however, her worthy father knew nothing ; at least, in connexion with the present topic.

“ Oh, ho ! I thought I saw how the land lay.”

“ Indeed, my dear papa——”

“ Say nothing more about it. Leave it all to me, lass. I’ll get him for you. None of your half-dead-and-alive fellows, that you could knock down with a tap of your fan ; no, he

shall be an able, rattling, rollocking chap, able to take your part by land or sea. Did your mother never tell you how I came by her, my girl?"

Kate, dispirited by her father's coarse humour, as well as by other things, answered in the negative.

"I'll tell you, then, as truly as if she were alive to hear me. Though as poor as a church mouse at that time, I was a hearty young shaver;* ay, as hearty, though not so matured, as I am this day, now that I am squire of the town-land, and a justice of the peace, to boot. By the way, I wish they'd make the parish clerk a justice of the peace in my stead; for I hate to be trying to look as grave as a mustard-pot, and as solemn as a wig-block. Well, I was at a Christmas raffle, Kate, and your mother's father was there too; as comical an old boy as you'd wish to know! I had a great regard for him, by Cork! and so, away he and I

* *I. e.* One who begins to use a razor.

raffled, and he lost to me every throw, until at last I didn't leave him a stiver. 'All I've won from you, and my watch to boot, against your daughter Nelly!' cries I of a sudden. 'Done!' cries he; and we threw again; and he lost, and I won again: and that's the way I got your mother, Kate! And now, do you guess anything else I'm going to say about yourself, Kate?"

"O papa, I hope——"

"I know you do hope. Yes, Kate, I *am* going to provide for you in something like the same way——"

"Now, good heavens, papa!——"

"Don't speak a word more till you hear me out. At the last club dinner in Dublin, Ned O'Brien calls me aside with a face as long as my own when I'm on the bench; and after a long-winded beginning, he prays my interest with you, Kate. 'To be sure, man,' says I, 'you must have it.' Then, up sneaks George Dempsey, and his business was the same. 'By

Cork, I'll court her in style for you, my boy,' was my word to George. And then, Mick Driscoll takes a turn at me, and begs of me, for the Lord's sake, to listen to him; and I was obliged to listen to him, all about his title-deeds and his pedigree; and he, too, craved my countenance, with the prettiest girl, and (what he *didn't* call you) the richest heiress in the province; and, 'By Jove! I'll do my best for you, Mick,' says I; and Mick nearly pulled the arm out o' my body, shaking my hand; but I'm not done yet. Harry Walshe made his way to me; and the boy to my fancy is Harry Walshe, Kate. 'I'm up to the saddle-skirts in love with your beautiful Kate,' says Harry. 'Pull away, my hearty fellow,' answers I; 'never fear, but I'll poll for your election.'"

"My dear papa——"

"Let me make an end, as I told you, Kate. Well, after dinner, and the bottle going merrily round, and every one of us right jovial, I rehearsed, for the benefit of the whole company

all the promises I had made, and a high joke it was; and then, ‘Here’s what I’ll do among you all, my good boys,’ says I; ‘Let every one of Kate’s wooers be on the turf the first morning of the next hunting season, each mounted in his best style; let there be no pull-in from the cover to the death; no baulking or shying, but smooth smack over everything that offers; and the lad that mounts the brush may come a-courting to my daughter Kate.’ Well, my girl, you’d think they had all lost their wits at this proposal; such joy amongst them, such shouting; many a bottle the rivals emptied, each to his own success; and in ten days from this blessed morning, the match comes off, my girl; and whoever wins, Kate will have a wooer worth throwing a cap at.”

Kate remained silent; tears of mortification and annoyance, unseen by her father, streaming from her eyes.

“But the cream of the jest I have not told you, Kate. Rattler is in training, privately,

the last two months—no one the wiser; and, harkee, Kate! by Cork's own town, I intend to start for you, myself! and the brush I'll wear in my own cap; and then, if I hav'n't my laugh, right out, why, in that case, 'tis the divvle that made little apples!"

And before the sensitive, and high-minded, and spirited girl could reply, away went her father to superintend Rattler, greatly chuckling over his scheme; and poor Catherine sat alone to blush and weep at the thought of being made, by her own father, the object of a vulgar and foolish contention.

Other sad thoughts mingled with her reveries. The unestimated military hero, to whom, while in Dublin, she had all but plighted her troth, had promised, in answer to a letter she despatched to him from the first post where she had halted with her father, on their flight from town, to make his appearance in the country, and try his fortune with the squire; but days had now rolled over, and he came not; neither did he

send a line to account for his absence. This was sad mortification to the pure ardency of a first love, in the breast of such a girl as Catherine; particularly when she recollected the most disagreeable predicament in which her father's unthinking folly and indelicacy had placed her.

The morning of the hunt drew near, and still her lover was absent and silent. The match had become the talk of the whole country. With great difficulty and perseverance, Catherine succeeded in bringing her father's mind to contemplate her position, in something of a vein of seriousness. He could not, indeed, "for the life of him," surmise why she seemed so earnest and afflicted. But he did see and comprehend that she was really unhappy; and the best that he could think of to cheer her, he said and swore. He would break his neck with pleasure, and to a dead certainty, rather than not bring home the brush, and fling it into her lap. And when Kate's fears, at this solemn declara-

tion, took, naturally, another turn, the honest squire was again at a loss to account for her tears, her clinging, though gentle embraces, and “her tantrums.” He bawled right out, in utter mystification, at her entreaties that, come what might, he would not join the hunt; and, in fact, upon the appointed morning, away he rode towards the fox-cover, mounted on his crack hunter, Morgan Rattler, as full of buoyancy, and vigour, and solicitude, as the youngest of the competitors he expected to meet.

Great shouts rent the skies, as, one by one, the candidates for the gentle Catherine arrived at the appointed ground. Their horses, as well as themselves, were examined by curious and critical eyes, and heavy bets were laid upon the issue of the day’s chase. The squire, without communicating to any of his rivals his intention to hunt for his daughter himself, had contrived that his own fox-hounds should be in requisition; because he well knew that Morgan Rattler would do surpassing wonders at their tails.

The ruler of the hounds was the same who had held that situation under the former owner of Squire Hogan's estate. In his youth, twenty years previously, we have noticed him as a daring fellow ; we should have added, that he used to be as remarkable for his boisterous good spirits as for his reckless intrepidity. Now, however, at five-and-forty, mirth, and even outward dash of every kind, had disappeared from his character. His face was forbidding ; his words were few ; he never laughed, he never smiled ; and, altogether, people regarded him as a dogged and disagreeable man. But enough of our huntsman for the present.

The day promised to be most favourable for the remarkable chase it was to witness.

“ A southerly wind and a cloudy sky

Proclaimed a hunting morning.”

The ground was in prime order ; the horses were full of vigour and spirit, after their long training ; and, except the huntsman's, (and he comes in again sooner than we foresaw,) every

face beamed with joyous animation. In fact, upon this day, he was making himself particularly offensive; quarrelling unnecessarily with his hounds; sulkily refusing to take any advice or opinions (commands were out of the question) concerning his treatment of them; and giving short answers, and looking "as black as thunder."

"What is the matter with you, Daniel?" questioned the squire.

"I have no fancy for the work to-day," answered the huntsman.

"Why so, man? what is all this about?"

"It was this day twenty years that my ould masther followed the witch down the rocks into the sey; and I was dreaming last night that he and I were hunting here, again, together, and that he drew me down the same lip afore him."

"Hutt, tut, you fool! there is no witch to hunt now, you know."

"I know no such thing. You hav'n't heard that she is in her cave again?"

“Pho, no; and ’tis impossible.”

“It is not impossible: ’tis thrue. Let little Tony take my place to-day; for I tell you twice over, I don’t like the work.”

“Bother, Daniel. This day, of all days, I can’t and I won’t spare you. Draw on the dogs; come, stir! see to your business.”

With mutterings and growlings, Daniel proceeded to obey. He cast the dogs into the cover. For some time they drew through it in silence. Presently some yelpings were heard; then the leader of the pack sent forth his most melodious note; dogs and men took it up; the fox broke cover; away after him stretched the eager hounds, and, close upon them, the no less eager huntsmen.

The squire stood still a moment, willing to let the foremost and most headlong candidates for his daughter’s favour blow their horses a little before he would himself push forward. While thus manœuvring, “Whom have we here?” he asked of the person nearest to him.

His inquiry was aroused by a strange huntsman who had just then appeared on the ground, no one could tell whence.

“By the good day!” exclaimed the person addressed, “that’s Jack Hogan who fell over the cliff, this day twenty years!”

“Nonsense, nonsense,” said the squire. The stranger turned round his head, as if he could have heard these words, though he was at a good distance.

“’Tis he, man! just as he looked the last day he hunted! his very dress! see how different from ours; and his black horse. I’d know horse and rider among a million! By all that’s good, it is himself!”

The horses of the squire and of his neighbour, a man of fifty, who thus spoke, would brook no further delay; and their riders were compelled to loosen their reins, and allow them to spring onward.

Daniel, the black-browed huntsman, was at this moment immediately next the hounds.

Two or three of the rivals for fair Catherine's love rode within a little distance of him. The new-comer loitered behind the last of the candidates: of course, the squire and his friend now pressed him hard. Suddenly his coal-black horse, seemingly without an effort, and certainly independently of one from his master, cleared the ground between him and Daniel. The huntsman turned in his saddle, fixed an appalled look on his follower, uttered a wild cry, and desperately dashed his spurs into the sides of his steed. The stranger, still seemingly unexcited, as also appeared his horse, stuck so close to Daniel's crupper, that he could have put his hand upon it.

All swore that the fox outstripped the wind in swiftness. The hounds did their very best, and more than they had ever done before, to keep near to him. Each huntsman, including even our honest squire, spared not whip and spur to rival them; but the huntsman first, and the

stranger at his horse's tail, were the only persons who succeeded in the achievement.

Vain was the endeavour to come up with those two. And every now and then, black Daniel would glare behind him into the face of his pursuer, and with a new shout of horror, re-urge his hunter to greater speed; and still, and still, although the stranger sat tranquilly in his saddle, Daniel could not gain a stirrup's length a-head of him. Over hill and valley, over ditch and hedge, over bog and stream, they swept, or plunged, or leaped, or scrambled, or swam, close upon the dogs, as if life were of no value; or as if they were carried, eddied forward, with supernatural speed, and in superhuman daring. Onward, onward they swept, scarce seeming to touch the earth, until at length only three other horsemen were able to keep them even in distant view. And, soon after, those three became two; and, again, but one followed remotely in their track; and this one was our excellent friend Squire Hogan.

The sea-cliffs came in view ! and straight towards them did the mad chase now turn. In amazement, if not in terror, the squire pulled up his horse on a rising ground, and stood still to note its further progress. He saw the panting fox make for the dangerous place over the cliff's brow. For an instant he saw him on its very line. The next, he disappeared towards the sea. At his brush came the hounds, and down they plunged also. The rival horsemen followed, and they, too, were, in a second, lost to view. A woman suddenly started up over the perilous pass, gazed below, and then sprang as if into the air.

The mysterious fate of his predecessor fully occurred to our Squire ; and he sensibly vowed to himself that, “ By Cork ! the faggot of a witch should never tempt him to leave the world by the same road.” He also brought to mind his huntsman's words that morning ; and a struggle arose between his reason and his superstitious

propensities, as to whether or no the man's dream had been verified.

While thus mentally engaged, one of the baffled aspirants for Catherine's hand came up, himself and his horse soiled and jaded. Another and another followed, until almost all the members of the day's hunt surrounded Squire Hogan. He recited to them what he had witnessed. Greatly excited, some of them dismounted, and, under the care of an experienced guide, descended the cliff.

They found that the bewitched hounds, and their bewitched followers need not, as the squire had supposed, have jumped direct from the land into the sea; inasmuch as they might have turned, obliquely, into a narrow, rocky ravine. Down this pass, however, it seemed impossible that horses of mortal mould could have found a footing. The explorers themselves were obliged to follow their guide very cautiously; as well to avoid tumbling downward, as to save

their heads from the loose stones and fragments of rocks, which almost every step displaced and set in motion.

After having proceeded a little way, they caught, far below them, a glimpse of the dogs, whose cry came up to them, mingled with the roar and chafe of the waters of the sea. Shortly after, they saw the huntsman, still closely pressed by the stranger. The next moment, dogs, horses, and riders were lost to view, behind a curve of the tortuous and stony course of the ravine, all hurrying onward and downward, with whirlwind speed, as if to bury themselves in the waves of the ocean.

Our adventurers, persevering in their descent, suddenly turned a projecting rock, and came in view of a strip of strand, running, promontory-like, into the sea; this they soon gained. Daniel, the huntsman, lay on his back upon it; his horse not to be seen. His dogs were squatted around him, each holding a fragment of bone between his teeth. The stranger sat still in his saddle, as if intensely observing

the prostrate man. The woman who had appeared to Squire Hogan on the cliff's brow stood on a rock amid the shallow breakers which rippled over the edges of the neck of strand.

As the explorers approached this group, the unknown horseman glanced towards them, took off his cap, waved it, and said, "Let no man claim Catherine Hogan's hand till I come to woo it. I have hunted for her; won her; and she is mine."

Those of Catherine's lovers who heard this speech were not chicken-hearted fellows. They resolved to ascertain who was the dictatorial speaker. Their friend, Squire Hogan, appeared in view, having nearly completed, at his cautious leisure, the descent to the sea's level, after them; and they first approached him, momentarily turning their backs on the object of their interest, for the purpose of consulting him, and enlisting him in a common plan of operations. After some discourse with

the good squire, and when he and they would have confronted the unknown horseman, no human form but that of sulky Daniel was visible on the patch of strand; and there he lay, stretched at his length, and still apparently insensible.

To him their attention became directed. They found him covered with blood, and seemingly a corpse. His dogs continued to couch around him, holding bones between their grinning teeth; and they snarled fiercely when the new comers approached them.

“By the blessed light!” exclaimed the Squire, “this is part of a man’s skull that Ranger has his teeth through!”

“It is,” answered Harry Walshe; “and not one of the dogs but holds a human bone between his jaws!”

The prostrate huntsman opened his eyes, and glared fearfully around him.

“What has happened to you, Daniel?” questioned the squire.

Daniel's head turned in the direction of the voice, and he seemed to recognise the speaker.

"Is he gone?" he asked, faintly.

"Is who gone? for whom do you inquire?"

"The masther's sperit—the sperit of the murdered man—the man that *I* murdered and buried in this sand, twenty years ago!"

Amid exclamations of surprise and horror from all who heard him, the huntsman gained, for a moment, more perfect power of observation. He looked from one to another of the group around him; then most ghastlily at the dogs; and then, closing his eyes, and shuddering, continued to speak in snatches.

"Ay, and it was a cruel murther. I have never slept a night's sleep since I did it. And every dog of the pack brought me one of his bones to-day. I will hide it no longer. I will own it to the world, and suffer for it. His sperit drove me before him to the spot where I had buried his broken body, afther I tumbled

him over the cliff—yes, buried it, as deep as I could dig. Twenty years passed away, and he came to chase me to his unblessed grave; and at the sight of it, my horse tossed me out of my saddle, and my own accursed bones are broken this day, and so I have half my punishment. Did I see the witch near me, here, a while ago; I did; an' the wathers o' the sey gave her up, alive, to be a witness against me. For, when I was burying him, this day twenty years, I spied her watching me; and I ran afther her, and saized her, and pitched her far into the waves; but now she is come to hang me. Let her. I will tell all—all—of my own accord; I will; and swing high for the deed."

He was conveyed to the squire's house; and in his presence, and that of other magistrates, made a more ample confession. He had been tempted to commit the murder under the following circumstances.

The mother of his old master received

under her protection a friendless and pennyless orphan girl of low birth. The young huntsman loved her to distraction; and his ardours were seemingly returned, until the squire, then a minor, became his successful rival, seducing, under a promise of marriage at his mother's death, his fickle mistress. Rage, hatred, loathing, took possession of Daniel's heart; he could have beaten out the brains of his young master with the loaded end of his hunting-whip; and his amiable feelings were not added to, when, upon a day that he was expostulating, alone, with the estranged object of his affections, the squire suddenly rushed upon him, snatched that identical whip from his hands, and energetically laid it across his own shoulders.

The squire's mother died. The squire cast off his mistress, and married a wealthy wife. It was now the turn of the depraved, bad-hearted, and forsaken girl, to look for her revenge. Upon certain conditions, she offered

herself, "soul and body," and without the trouble of a marriage, to her old lover. Daniel's eager passion for her, and his deep detestation of her undoer, had scarce abated. He felt sorely tempted, but hesitated. The girl threw herself in his way, from time to time; refired him; and in almost a year subsequent to the first attempt to make him a murderer, he *was* one, nay, a double one; for, a few days after he had dragged his master off his horse, and hurled him down the cliff, he placed in his tempter's arms, on the understanding that she was to destroy it, the only child of his victim. But, even in the disappointment of his feverish dream of passion, he had a foretaste of the punishment due to his crime. From the moment he committed to her the helpless infant she so much detested, he had never seen the authoress of his ruin; and his belief was, that, after having murdered "the child of days," she had put an end to her own existence.

A few hours following his confession, the huntsman died.

Whether or no the gentle Catherine shared the popular belief that she had been hunted for, and won by, and was doomed to become a spectre's bride, is not clearly ascertainable. True it is, that her cheek faded, that her eye grew dull, and that the smile of contented pleasure forsook her moistly-red lip, now no longer red nor moist. But these changes may as well be accounted for on less supernatural grounds. Her military adorer still continued absent and silent; he who had so often vowed himself away into wordless sighs, nay, tears, under the big effort to define how much he loved her, and whose only hesitation to declare himself to her father, had always assumed the shape of a fear of being regarded as a speculating fortune-hunter; when, at a glance, it could be ascertained that he was almost an unfriended adventurer, courting the hand of a wealthy heiress.

As to good Squire Hogan, he contrived, or, perhaps, rather tried, to laugh at the whole thing; vaguely calling it a very good hoax; "a choice one, by Jove!" just to save himself the trouble of trying to unravel it; or else to hide his half-felt ignorance on the subject. Meantime he got some cause to laugh a little less than usual. Ejectments were served upon his estate, in the name of the lost son of the man whom he had succeeded in it. And Squire Hogan only strove to laugh the more; and to affect that he considered the claim as an uncommonly good attempt at "a capital hoax!" practised upon him by some unknown persons whom, on some past occasion, he must have outwitted "gloriously;" but it was a poor attempt at mirth, and he saw that Catherine, as well as himself, felt that it was.

In fact, he spent many hours alone, mourning for his beloved child, and taxing his brains to shield her from probable and verging mis-

fortune. And a brilliant thought came into his head.

Would it not be a happy, as well as an exceedingly clever thing, to dispose of Catherine, before the trial at law, grounded upon the ejectments, should commence, and while the matter was little suspected, to one or other of her ardent admirers at the club-dinner in Dublin; to, in fact, Ned O'Brien, or George Dempsey, or Mick Driscoll; or, above all, to Harry Walshe? And the wise father made the attempt, duly, four times in succession; and learned, thereby, that the serving of the ejectments was more generally known than he had imagined.

Still he tried to laugh, however; until one morning, when his boisterousness ended in sudden tears, as he cast his head on Catherine's shoulder, and said:—"Oh, Kate, Kate! what is to become of *you*?—I think I can bear poverty,—but you!"

“ My dear father, do not be cast down,” answered Catherine ; “ I can earn money, in many ways, for us both, if good people will give me employment.”

“ And you are going a-working to support your father, Kate ?” He left the room sobbing. His tears affected Catherine to the quick. Other sad and bitter recollections swelled her sorrow into a flood. She could now account for the persevering neglect of her lover, and her tenderly-beloved, upon no other grounds than those of her approaching poverty. Oh, that was a heart-cutting thought !

The day upon which the poor squire must necessarily start from the country to attend the trial in Dublin, arrived ; and he commenced his journey with another magnificent conception in his head ; to eke out which, he carried in his pocket, without her knowledge, a miniature of his daughter Catherine. And with this miniature, and a note, expressive of his willingness to compromise the matter by a

marriage, he called on the new claimant for his squireship, the evening of his arrival in the metropolis. But, having retired to his own town-house long before he could have thought it possible that his note had received a leisurely reading, he received back the miniature with a technical epistle from his rival's attorney, stating that no compromise could be entered into; that the heir-at-law was determined to accept nothing which the law should not decide to be his right; and, adding, that any attempts to see the young gentleman must prove unavailing, while they would be felt to be intrusive; inasmuch as, in cautious provision against a failure in his attempt to establish his claim, he had invariably concealed his person, even from his legal advisers.

This was the first really serious blow our squire had received. Hitherto he had courageously depended on his own innate cleverness to outwit the coming storm; now, within a few hours of the trial which was to de-

termine his fate, he acknowledged himself without a resource or an expedient, beyond patience to attend to the grave proceeding, sit it out, and endeavour to comprehend it.

To beguile the remainder of his sad evening, after receiving the attorney's communication, he repaired to his club-room. He found himself cut there. Issuing, in no pleasant mood, into the streets, he encountered, by lamp-light, an individual in a red coat whom he had hitherto considered rather as a deferential hanger-on than as an acquaintance to boast of. Now, at least, by unbending himself, he need not fear a repulse; so, he warmly stretched out both his hands, received a very distant bow of recognition, and was left alone under a lamp-post.

“By Cork!” said the squire, with a bitter laugh, “the puppy officer thinks I am turned upside down in the world already!”

The cause came on. Our good friend's eyes were riveted on every person who uttered

a word, upon one side or the other. The usual jollity of his countenance changed into the most painful expression of anxiety; and when anything witty was said by one of his Majesty's counsel, learned in the law, at which others laughed, his effort to second them was miserable to behold. And although it was a bitter cold day, the squire constantly wiped the perspiration from his forehead and face; chewing, between whiles, a scrap of a quill which he had almost unconsciously picked off his seat.

The depositions, on his death-bed, of Daniel the huntsman, were tendered against him. They established the fact of the wretched self-accuser having kidnapped the heir of his then master, and handed the infant to his partner in crime. And the first living witness who appeared on the table, was that witch, supposed to have been long dead, even by Daniel himself. She swore that she had intended to destroy the babe; that, however, having got

it into her arms, she relented of her purpose, and gave it, with a bribe, to a strange woman, in a distant district, to expose for her on the high road. Next came the woman alluded to, and she proved that she had followed the directions of her employer, and afterwards watched, unseen, until an elderly lady of her neighbourhood, passing by with a servant, picked up the little unfortunate. And, lastly, the aforesaid elderly lady, who, by the way, had endured some little scandal, at the time, for her act of christian charity, corroborated this person's testimony; and further deposed that she had carefully brought up, on limited means, until the day she procured him a commission in his Majesty's service, the plaintiff in the case at issue. Not a tittle of evidence, in contradiction to that stated, was offered by the defendant; and the only link of the chain of proof submitted by the heir-at-law, which the squire's counsel energetically sought to cut through, was that created by the first witness. On her

cross-examination, it was ingeniously attempted to be impressed on the minds of the jury, that no reliance could be placed upon the oath of a depraved creature like her; that she had really made away with the infant, according to her original intention; and that the one she had offered for exposure, must have been her own, the result of her acquaintance with the son of her benevolent and ill-requited protectress. But, without pausing upon details, we shall only say, that during the trial, sound confirmatory evidence of the truth of the miserable woman's assertion was supplied; and that, in fact, without hesitation, the jury found for the plaintiff.

Squire Hogan's look of consternation, when he heard the verdict, was pitiable. For a moment he bent down his head and wiped his forehead with his moist handkerchief. Then, with a wretched leer distorting his haggard countenance, he started up, and muttering indistinctly, bowed low to the judge, the jury, the

bar, the public, all, as if he would humbly acknowledge the superiority of every human being. After this, forgetting his hat, he was hurrying away; some one placed it in his hand; he bowed lowly, and smiled again; and, finally, forgetting the necessity to remain uncovered, he pressed it hard over his eyes and left the court; carrying with him the sincere, and, in some instances, the tearful sympathy of the spectators.

As fast as horses could gallop with him, he left Dublin, a few moments following.

“By Cork, Kate”——he began, laughing, as his daughter, upon his arrival at the house which used to be his home, hurried to meet him: but he could not carry on the farce; his throat was full and choking; and suddenly throwing himself upon his child’s neck, he sobbed aloud.

She understood him, but said nothing: she only kissed his cheeks and pressed his hands, keeping down all show of her own grief and

alarm.—Woman ! in such a situation, *you* can do this : man cannot : it is above the paltry selfishness of his nature.

He rallied, and tried to take up his absurd jeering tone, but soon tripped in it a second time.

“ Ay, Kate—by the good old Jove, I’m a poorer man than the day I raffled for your mother ; and you *must* work, sure enough, to try and keep a little bread with us. If there’s anything you think *I* can turn my hand to, only say the word, and you’ll see I’ll not be idle, my poor girl.”

He entered into the details of his misfortunes and mortifications. Among other things, he mentioned the slight of “ the puppy officer ;” and neither his wonder nor his curiosity was excited, when, now for the first time, Catherine burst into tears.

It shows much good sense to take my Lady Law at her word. Fortune is fickle, but law is fickleness : the principle itself. And so seemed

to argue the successful young aspirant to the squire's estate. While yet only expatiating on his past misfortunes, our worthy friend received a note which informed him that, in a quarter of an hour, an authorised agent would arrive to take possession of the house and lands; and father and daughter had not recovered from the shock this gave them, when the agent was announced, and entered the room where they sat. Catherine turned away her face: she could not look at him.

“ Possession of everything in the house, too ?” asked the trembling squire—“ everything, you say ?”

“ Everything,” answered the agent, who was no man's agent but his own, after all. Catherine started at his voice—“ Yes, everything; even of the angel that makes this house a heaven.” — He advanced to her side. She turned to him—shrieked—laughed—and lay insensible in his arms. It was the squire's “ puppy officer” in the first place; Catherine's

faithful adorer, in the second place; the plaintiff in the late action, in the third place; and the triumphant hunter for his mistress's hand, in the fourth place. Surely, dear, fair readers, he had a claim on her. "Yes—if he account for his neglect, since she left Dublin." Very good. That's easily done. He had vainly applied for leave of absence; and his letter, advising her of the fact, as also of his intention to take the field for her, dressed in the costume of a picture of his then unknown father, (which, in the squire's town-house, Catherine had often pronounced very like him,) that letter had miscarried.

"So your daughter is mine, good sir, on your own terms," added the four-fold hero.

"Capital, by Jove!—Capital! a glorious hoax, by Cork! capital!" laughed the ex-squire.

"I am delighted you think so; and I assure you, my dear sir, that I dressed myself up like

the picture, merely at the time, to endeavour to recommend myself to your good opinion, by the oddity of the conceit; for I knew you liked a hoax in your very heart."

"Give me your hand, my dear boy!—Like a hoax!—Ah, don't I?—and it *is* such a prime one! choice! capital! capital, by the beard of the good old Jove!"—and, wringing his own hands, and transported by his feelings, the worthy man left the room, to describe and praise to his very servants what so much gladdened his soul.

"You were ignorant of your parentage upon the day of the hunt?" asked Catherine, after they had conversed some time together.

"I was. Upon the spot where the huntsman fell, I encountered the woman, returned from half a life of wandering, who exposed me in my infancy: she had been seeking me in Dublin, to unburden her conscience, and do me a tardy justice. I was on the road for the hunt; thither

she followed me rapidly, and outstripped me some days ; assuming the garb of the former witch of the cave, to conceal her identity. I need scarce say, that from her I then received the information which enabled me to prosecute my claim. My beloved Catherine's sense of delicacy will readily suggest to her, why I kept out of her view, from that day, until I could prove the truth or falsehood of her story. And now, here I sit, able, thank heaven ! to show to the woman of my heart, that she did not quite misplace her generous love, when she gave it to a poor and friendless ensign, and with it the prospect of wealth, and of rank in the world."

It is recorded that, from this hour, Squire Hogan never wore, except perhaps when asleep, a serious face. Having resigned, "with a hearty good will," his commission of justice of the peace, there remained nothing on earth to compel him to "seem wise," as Bacon says ; and

he had full leisure to pursue, uninterruptedly, his practical hoaxes; which he himself, if nobody else did it for him, called "Capital! choice, by Cork's own town!"

THE SOLDIER'S BILLET.

THE SOLDIER'S BILLET.

SOME years ago, a regiment marched through the French town in which I resided, on their way to the camp of Charles X. at St. Omer. Two of the soldiers were billeted on me. I had been struck with the face of one of the two as they entered the town—indeed, by his conduct and manner, as well as his features. After passing the gate, the regiment, at word of command, I believe, broke their lines, and went scampering, and jumping, and shouting, like possessed creatures, down the precipitous main street to the place where they were to get their billets served out to them—a most indecorous

exhibition to eyes accustomed to the gravity of English soldiers after a march—indeed, upon all occasions: and, I suppose, their pranks were meant to express joy at having gained a resting point for the day and night with the near prospect of bread and onions and *bonne soupe*. But I digress. One man, among them all, cut no such capers as I have mentioned, contenting himself with tramping sedately down the street, his musket held by the middle in his left hand; nor did he shout or utter any boyish nonsense like his comrades, nor contract his features as only Frenchmen can do. In fact, though young—about seven and twenty—and handsome too,—thought, if not sorrow, sat on his open, manly brow, and compressed the corners of his mouth—so far as I could observe his mouth, it so appeared to me; for not only did he wear *moustaches* of a prolific growth, but his black beard had been suffered to grow at pleasure—another peculiarity about him; no second man

of his regiment having spared his chin from the razor.

After seeing the soldiers come in, I did not immediately return home : and when I got to my door, the individual I have been describing was standing at it with his comrade, a lad scarce one and twenty. He handed me his billet with a grave but well-mannered bow, asking if he had come to the right number. I told him all was right, so far ; but that I was exempt from a billet, inasmuch as my house was a furnished one, and that my landlord was to provide him with accommodation for the night. He replied, that he knew no mere lodgers in a furnished house could be called on to receive him, and asked how far off was my landlord's residence. I said, half a league, in the country. He shook his head, and continued to say, still with the utmost civility, if not blandness, that he and his young friend were too tired to take to the road again, after a long march,

and in such bad weather; (the poor fellows were, indeed, soaked with rain, and the mud clung about their feet and legs, almost up to their knees;) but they would wait till I could send a messenger to my landlord for instructions; and, if I could allow them to sit down at my kitchen fire in the meantime, they would very much thank me. While he spoke, he leaned his back against the wall of the house, and having reversed his musket, put its muzzle on his shoe, and rested his hands on its butt and his cheek on them. His manner, his voice, his most respectable expression, and above all, I believe, his large, round, mild, blue eyes, made a conquest of my precision and of my praiseworthy attachment to a franc or two. I rang at the door, after a moment's pause, and telling him he should wait for nothing at my kitchen fire, but for his dinner, I ushered in him and his *jeune ami* to Mademoiselle Phrosyne, who received her guests in a great fluster, but still

with the due number of curtsies, in answer to their bows; and then she put a chair for each at opposite corners of the fire; and so behold me the hospitable host of—as we are told—two of the “natural enemies” of old England. I lingered in the kitchen some time. My grave soldier sat down at once, crossing his arms on his knees, and poking his body and head towards the fire. His youthful comrade saved him the trouble of putting his piece in a corner and his cap on a table, and had a kind “Thank you, Pierre,” for his good-nature. The lad then pulled off his own gaiters in a twinkling, and, tucking up his muddy trousers, ran to the kitchen pump as naturally as if he had been in the house all his life, and set about washing, over the sink, the first-named articles of dress. Phrosyne offered him her black paste soap, but he declined it, laughingly, and while proceeding in his work, said he dared her to wash his gaiters as well with soap as

he should without it; at which Mademoiselle laughed too, while busy over her saucepans; it was not the first pleasantry they had interchanged, and Phrosyne was a youthful *cuisinière*, and did not shame her name for comeliness—in fact, I saw she was in for a pleasant evening, with one of her guests, at least; but the other continued silent and melancholy. He did not hesitate, indeed, to answer my questions promptly and politely, but he never spoke of his own accord. Before I left the kitchen, he had begun to take off his gaiters, in imitation of Pierre; but the lad insisted on having them to wash after his own, adding, “And for this evening, at least, Louis, I will work for two, at the muskets, the trousers, shoes, and all.”

“Are you and Pierre relations?” I asked.—“No, Sir,” he answered, “but,” smiling for the first time, as he pulled Pierre’s ear, who was kneeling to get off the gaiters, “we have been friends nearly a year, ever since the day he joined the regiment.”

All this interested me, and I went up stairs to interest my wife by telling it over to her. We agreed to do something to make the two men comfortable. A good fire was ordered in their bed-room, at which they might sit to dine, after having cleaned their arms, accoutrements, and clothes. Hours of the evening wore away, and we did not hear their voices or steps in the house: they only sent up their thanks for Monsieur's kind attentions. I inquired from time to time how they were occupied; and when I thought they might be at leisure, went down to their sleeping-room to try and get the elder of them into conversation. He was alone; sitting over the fire, which he had suffered to decay, in the same bent position he had adopted in the kitchen. I believe he slumbered; for my entrance did not make him raise his head; so, not wishing to disturb him, after his weary march, I turned into the kitchen to his more lively comrade, whose laugh, mingled with

that of Phrosyne and of her fellow servant, attracted me thither.

I spoke to Pierre about his friend, and pointedly noticed his melancholy. In a few minutes I learned the cause of it. Before drawing his *mauvais numéro* as a conscript, seven years before, Louis had loved—"not wisely"—Rosalie, the only daughter of the richest man of his village—the miller, no less. Rosalie loved him in return, but her father was obdurate. They met in secret once too often: Rosalie became an unwedded mother. But before that event, and while her condition was known to the whole village, Louis again, and repeatedly, solicited the miller to allow her to become his wife, and again and again he was refused. He heard he was a father; he asked permission to see his child; it was denied him. The morning the baby was baptized in the church, he suddenly appeared amid the family group who surrounded it, kissed it, and claimed it, and insisted that it should bear

his name, of which its stern grandfather wished to deprive it. The clergyman was compelled to yield him his right. A few days after he was a conscript; "and," continued Pierre, "they tell me, that since the first day he came to the regiment, now seven years ago, he has been always, and to every one, what Monsieur has seen he is to-day—civil, kind, but very sad. But this does not interfere with his duties. He is one of the best soldiers, if not the very best soldier among us. *I* uphold him to be *the* very best. A good, and true, and most useful friend he has been to me since I joined the 27th, and I love him like a brother. Everybody loves him—ay, and respects him too; men and officers, all the same; and it is pleasure to me, when he will let me do a hand's turn for him, to save him trouble. I wonder will his Rosalie be true to him for another year—after which he may return home to see her and his child. I hope she will."

"I hope so, too," sighed Phrosyne.

“ And I,” echoed Sophie.

“ And I, Pierre,” said I, “ with all my heart.”

“ Thank you a thousand times, Monsieur,” replied Pierre, his eyes glowing.

Now, were I writing what did not really happen, word for word, and did I not dislike disturbing the honest facts in my own mind, I could very easily go on to say that I had been travelling by chance through Rosalie's village, about a year after, and just in the nick of time to witness the nuptials of her and Louis. But I cannot bear to lie, even poetically, on this subject. The truth is, I know nothing more about it ! and to the truth I limit myself. That I continue to hope what we all hoped that evening round the kitchen fire, need scarce be doubted. Nor have I ever seen Louis since ; he had gone to bed before I left the kitchen. I heard from him, however, in the shape of the following note, handed to me by Sophie, after the departure of him and Pierre, next morning, long before daybreak :—

“The two French soldiers, below, thank the good English Monsieur of this house for unexpected and unusual kindness, after a long march, on a bad day. May God bless him and Madame, and *les petits enfans*.”

A PEASANT GIRL'S LOVE.

A PEASANT GIRL'S LOVE.

THE county assizes had commenced in my native town, when a new batch of Irish tithe arrangers were brought in prisoners by a strong party of police. They had attacked only the previous evening a gentleman's house, in our neighbourhood, for the purpose of rifling it of arms—had been repulsed by the police, who, aware of their intentions, lay in ambush for them, and lives were lost on both sides. I was idling on one of the bridges, when they passed by to the jail, bound, with ropes and with belts and buckles, to the common cars of the country, and the expression of their haggard cheeks

and hopeless or scowling eyes, was sickening in the sun-light of that beautiful spring day. Some of them were wounded too, and brow, or hand, or clothing, gave painful evidence of the fact.

But, although the general impression made by the whole of the wretched groups was disagreeable, one face among them strongly interested me. It was that of a young man not more than nineteen or twenty; his features were comely, and, I would have it, full of goodness and gentleness. His clear blue eye, too, was neither sulky, nor savage, nor reckless, but seemed to express only great awe of his situation, unless when, from some sudden mental recurrence,—to home, perhaps,—it quailed, or filled with tears. I involuntarily followed the melancholy procession towards the jail, thinking of that young man. After all the prisoners had been ushered into their new abode, a popular, anti-tithe attorney, whom I knew, accosted me. He was always ready to conduct'

gratis, the defences of poor wretches similarly situated, and he told me his intention of going into the jail, that moment, to try and collect materials for saving the lives, at least, of some of the new comers. I expressed a wish to assist him in his task: he readily consented, observing, that as the unfortunate men would certainly be put on their trials the next day, no offer of aid, in their favour, was to be disregarded; and so we entered the jail together.

It fell to my lot to visit the cell, among others, of the lad who had so much struck me. His assertions, supported, or not contradicted, by most of his band, seemed to argue that I had not formed a wrong opinion of his character—nay, better still, that there was a good chance of snatching him from the gallows, even though he must leave his native land for ever. He had been forced, he said, to accompany the others upon their fatal sortie—had never been “out” before—and had not pulled a trigger or raised a hand against the police; and, as I have said,

his more guilty associates supported, or else did not contradict his statement. So, confident that the police would also bear him out, at the really critical moment, I took notes of his defence for my friend the attorney, and passed on to other cells—but of the results of my continued investigation I will not now speak.

The sagacious attorney was right. By twelve o'clock next day four of the men, including my favourite client, were placed at the bar of their country: three others were too ill of their wounds to be at present produced. All was soon over—and over to my affliction. Instead of swearing that the young lad had been comparatively forbearing during the battle outside the gentleman's house, the police, one and all, from some strange mistake—for surely they thought they were in the right—distinctly deposed, that his was the hand which slew one of their force, and badly wounded another. In vain did he protest, with the energy of a young man pleading for dear, dear life, and all its

array of happy promise, against their evidence; in vain did his fellow prisoners support him: he and they were found guilty in common; but his fate was the terrific one—of him the example was to be made; and while the other men were only sentenced to transportation for life, he was doomed to be hanged by the neck within forty-eight hours, and his body given for dissection.

As the judge uttered the last words of his sentence, a shriek, I shall never forget—it rings through my head now, and makes my nerves quiver and cringe—a woman's shriek—and a young woman's too, pierced up to the roof of the silent court-house, and then I heard a heavy fall. The young culprit had been trembling and swaying from side to side during his sentence; at the thrilling sound he started into upright and perfect energy; his hands, which had grasped the bar of the dock, were clapped together with a loud noise; the blood mounted to his very forehead; his lips parted widely, and, having almost shouted out, "Moya! it's

she! I knew she'd be here!" he suddenly made a spring to clear the back of the dock. Obviously, no impulse to escape dictated the action; he wanted to raise Moya—his betrothed Moya—from the floor of the court-house, and clasp her in his arms—and that was all. And, doubtless, in his vigorous and thrice-nerved strength, he must have succeeded in his wild attempt, but that the sleeve of one arm, and the hand of the other, became impaled on the sharp iron spikes which surmounted the formidable barrier before him. Thus cruelly impeded, however, he was easily secured, and instantly led down, through a trap-door in the bottom of the dock, to his "condemned cell," continuing, till his voice was lost in the depths beneath us, to call out, "Moya! cuishla-ma-chree, Moya!"

I hastened, with many others, into the body of the court, and there learned, from her father and mother, and other friends, the connexion between her and the sentenced lad. They were

to have been married at Easter. This did not lessen my interest in him. My attorney joined me, and we spoke of all possible efforts to obtain a commutation of his sentence, after Moya's parents had forced her out of the court-house, on the way to their home, rejecting all her entreaties to be led into the jail, and—married.

We thought of hearing what the wounded policeman might say. But he was fourteen miles distant, on the spot where the affray had occurred, and, even though his evidence might be favourable, we knew we must be prepared to forward it to Dublin, as the judge would leave our town for the metropolis that day. We set to work, however, mounted two good horses, and within three hours learned from the lips of the wounded man that the Rockite who had fired at him was an elderly and ill-favoured fellow. It was our next business to convey our new evidence into the town; we did so, in a carriage borrowed from the person whose house had been attacked. He was confronted with

all the prisoners ; we cautioned him to say nothing that might give a false hope to the object of our interest ;—but, after leaving the cell, he persisted in exculpating him from having either killed his comrade or wounded himself, and, moreover, pointed out the real culprit among those who had not yet been put upon their trial.

This was a good beginning. An affidavit was soon prepared, which the policeman signed. A few minutes afterwards the attorney, helped in his expenses for the road by some friends, myself among the number, started for Dublin as fast as four horses could gallop with him. Ten hours, out of the forty-eight allowed to the condemned to prepare for death, had already elapsed. Our good attorney must do the best he could within thirty-seven hours—it was fearful not to leave an hour to spare—to calculate time when it would just be merging into eternity. But we had good hopes. If horses did not fail on the road, going and returning, and if the

judge, and, after him, the Lord Lieutenant, could be rapidly approached, it was a thing to be done. That *if*, however!—I scarcely slept a wink through the night. Next morning early, I called on the clergyman whose sad duty it was to visit the poor lad in his condemned cell: he and I had been schoolfellows; and he was a young man of most amiable character. He told me “his poor penitent” was not unfit to die, nor did he dread the fate before him, notwithstanding his utter anguish of heart at so sudden and terrible a parting from his young mistress. I communicated the hopes we had, and asked the clergyman’s opinion as to the propriety of alleviating the lad’s agony by a slight impartation of them. My reverend young friend would not hear of such a thing: his conscience did not permit him. It was his duty, he said, his sacred duty, to allow nothing to distract the mind and heart of his penitent from resignation to his lot: and should he give him a hope of life, and then see that hope dashed,

he would have helped to kill a human soul, not to save one. I gave up the point, and endeavoured to seek occupations and amusements to turn my thoughts from the one subject which absorbed and fevered them. But in vain: and when the second night came, I had less sleep than on the first.

Early on the second morning, I took a walk into the country, along the Dublin road, vaguely hoping to meet, even so early, our zealous attorney, returning to us, with a white handkerchief streaming from the window of his post-chaise: that idea had got into my head, like a picture, and would recur every moment. I met him not. I lingered on the road. I heard our town clock pealing twelve—the boy had but an hour to live. I looked towards the county jail, whither he had been removed for execution—the black flag was waving over its drop-door. Glancing once more along the Dublin road, I ran as fast as I could towards the jail. Arrived at the iron gate of its outer yard, I was scarce

conscious of the multitude who sat on a height confronting it, all hushed and silent, or of the strong guard of soldiers at the gate, till one of them refused me way. I bribed the serjeant to convey my name to the governor of the prison, and was admitted, first, into the outer-yard, then by the guard-room door, and along a colonnade of pillars, connected with iron-work, at either hand, into the inner courts of the jail. The guard-room was under the execution-room, and both formed a building in themselves, separated from the main pile; the colonnade of which I have spoken, leading from one to the other. What had sent me where I now found myself, was an impulse to beseech the sheriff (whom I knew, and who was necessarily in the jail to accompany the condemned to the door of the execution-room) for some short postponement of the fatal moment. He came out to me, in one of the courts at either side of the colonnade; we spoke in whispers, as the good and kind-hearted governor and I had done—

though there was not a creature to overhear us, in the deserted, sunny spaces all around. I knew the sheriff must at his peril make any change in the hour; but I told him our case, and his eyes brightened with zeal and benevolence, while he put his watch back three quarters of an hour, and asseverated, with my uncle Toby's oath, I believe, that he would swear it was right, and that all their clocks were wrong, and "let them hang himself for his mistake."

Our point arranged, we sank into silence. It was impossible to go on talking, even in our conscious whispers: one o'clock soon struck! The governor, pale and agitated, appeared, making a sad signal to the sheriff. We beckoned him over to us, and he was shown the infallible watch, and retired again, without a word. My friend and I continued standing side by side, in resumed silence. And all was silence around us too, save some few most melancholy, most appalling sounds: one caused by the step of a sentinel under the win-

dow of the condemned cell, at an unseen side of the prison: another by the audible murmurings of the condemned and his priest, heard through that window—both growing more fervent in prayer since the jail clock had pealed one; and a third was made by some person, also unseen, striking a single stroke with a wooden mallet, about every half-minute, upon a large muffled bell, at the top of the prison. Yes—I can recal two other sounds which irritated me greatly: the chirping of sparrows in the sun—and I thought that their usually pert note was now strangely sad—and the tick, tick of the sheriff's watch, which I heard distinctly in his fob. The minutes flew. I felt pained in the throat—burning with thirst—and losing my presence of mind. The governor appeared again. My friend entered the prison with him. I remained alone, confused. In a few minutes, the governor came out, bare-headed, and tears were on his cheeks. The young clergy-

man and his younger penitent followed; the former had passed an arm through one of the manacled ones of the latter, and the hands of both were clasped, and pointed upward, and they both were praying audibly. My old schoolfellow wept like a child. My poor client had passed the threshold into the colonnade, with a firm step—his knees kept peculiarly stiff as he paced along, and his cheeks and forehead were scarlet, while his eye widened and beamed, and was fixed on the steps going up to the execution-room, straight on before him. He did not yet see me, gazing at him. As the sheriff appeared behind him and his priest, also bareheaded, I rapidly snatched my hat from my head. The action attracted his attention — our glances met—and oh! how the flush instantly forsook his forehead and his cheeks—and how his eyes closed—while cold perspiration burst out on his brow, and he started, stopped, and faltered!—Did he recognize me

as the person who had spoken kindly to him in his cell, before his trial, and perhaps, with all my precaution, given him a vague hope? or, was it that the unexpected appearance of a human creature, staring at him in utter commiseration, in that otherwise lonely courtyard, had touched the chord of human associations, and called him back to earth, out of his enthusiastic vision of heaven?—I know not. I cannot even guess:—*who* can? As he faltered, the young priest passed his arm round his body, and gently urged him to his knees, and knelt with him, kissing his cheeks, his lips, pressing his hands, and in tender whispers manning him again for facing shame, and death, and eternity. The governor, the sheriff, and I, instinctively assumed the attitude of prayer at the same moment.—But I hate to give a character of clap-trap to a real, though wonderful occurrence, by continuing, too circumstantially. Moya's "own boy" never even mounted the steps of the exe-

cution-room. We were first startled, while we all knelt, by—as it afterwards proved—her shrieks at the outer gates: she had escaped from the restraint of her family, and had come to the jail, insisting on being married to him “wid the rope itself round his neck, to live a widow for him for ever”—and next there was a grand shout from the multitude on the rural heights before the prison, and my one ceaseless idea of our attorney, with a white handkerchief streaming through the window of his post-chaise *was* realised, though every one saw it but I. And Moya, self-transported for life, went out to Van Dieman's Land, some weeks afterwards, a happy and contented wife, her family having yielded to her wishes at the instance of more advocates than herself, and put some money in her purse also.

THE HALL OF THE CASTLE.

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NOTWITHSTANDING that the castle of Kilkenny generally held a strong garrison, upon an October evening, in the year 1390, its bastions, towers, and other points of defence, were almost unmanned; its courts almost silent; and but a few very old or very young domestics sat in its great hall, with arms in their hands, and with doubt and anxiety impressed on their features. It had sent out its last regular soldier, together with all its able-bodied serfs, to support their lord, James, Earl of Ormonde, in a battle against the Desmond, touching the rights and bounds of certain lands; and in-

telligence of the result of the fray was, upon this evening, every moment expected at its gates.

The lady of the fortress knelt in her private chapel, at "the altar of the holy stone," in fervent, but not faltering prayer. The pride of name, the pride of feudal animosity, and the pride of her love of her martial husband, equally kept her heart unconscious of fear. The utmost condescension of her anxiety was to doubt; but nothing did she, or would she, doubt upon the subject which engrossed her soul, so far as regarded its issue by mortal means. Uncontrolled by a superior power, the Botiller, the Ormonde, the lord of her heart and her life, ever commanded success against a Desmond; and she knelt, therefore, only to pray that the will of God might not, on this occasion, fight against her, and hers.

Her orisons ended, she slowly arose, and after bending her head, and crossing her calm and high forehead before the altar, paced along

the solitary chapel, and issued from it, through a low, arched door. Many flights of narrow stone steps, twining upward from the foundations of the castle, upon a level with which was the chapel-floor, conducted her to the suite of small rooms leading into her sleeping-chamber; thence she gained a lobby, which gave entrance to what was called "The Long Gallery" of the edifice; where finding herself alone, the lady of Ormonde blew a shrill and loud call upon the little silver whistle which hung from her neck.

But no person answered her; and while her commanding brow assumed a severe expression, she was again about to put the whistle to her lips, when the notes of a trumpet, sounding the signal for defence, reached her from, as she believed, the embattled wall which faced and fell down to the Nore, full forty feet, although its top was still much lower than the foundation stone of the fortress it helped to defend. The point from which the martial

strain seemed to arise was fully commanded by the spacious end window of the long gallery ; and thither the lady of Ormonde now repaired, with a more rapid step than was habitual to her.

Arrived at the window, she boldly flung open its casements, and gazed directly downward. Two figures only met her view, those of the individuals whom she had reckoned upon meeting in the gallery after her return from the chapel ; namely, Simon Seix, the half-witted foster-brother of her only son, (and only child, too,) and that only son, himself, mounted on Simon's shoulders, who galloped, or pranced, or curvetted, along the terra-plana of the wall.

"The poor born-natural !" she muttered ; "again will he disobey my commands not to leave the castle with his young lord ? and leave it for such antics, too, and to be played upon that perilous wall ; and doubtless it was he who erewhile mimicked the sound of trumpet which so challenged us !" —

The lady recollected Simon's talent for imitating the tones of all the instruments of music which he had ever heard played, as well, indeed, as of the voices of many animals; and even at the moment her surmise was confirmed; for, after he had exceedingly well performed the loud neighing and snorting of an enraged battle-charger, as an accompaniment to a devious and (still the lady thought) perilous caracole, she saw and heard him blow a second trumpet blast through the hollow of his hand, which might well be mistaken for the martial music it faithfully copied. It was a strain of victory and triumph; and Simon seemed enamoured of his own execution of it; for he prolonged the sounds, as though he would never end them, until, at last, they suddenly stopped, breaking off in a ludicrous cadence of terror as the overmastering shrillness of his lady's whistle cut them short.

Turning up his large grey eyes to the open window far above him, he saw the awful figure

of his offended mistress half bending from it. Her arm was raised, her hand clenched, and she stamped her foot, and pointed to him to re-enter the castle. The Lord Thomas—so was called the little boy of seven or eight years on his back—looked up also; but while Simon assumed a face of the utmost fright and affliction, he only laughed merrily and graciously, in answer to his mother's signs; and then, resisting his foster-brother's preparations to place him on his own feet, he obliged Simon still to bear him on his shoulders.

In a few moments, the little lord Thomas appeared before his mother, in the gallery. Her first look towards him was one of grave reprehension; but when, presuming on her love for him, as well as prompted by his own love for her, the boy came bounding forward; his perfectly amiable and intelligent countenance wearing smiles, which at once deprecated her anger and admitted error, but made light of it; the stately lady's brow relaxed, and, think-

ing of his father, she opened her arms to receive him.

“But where tarries Simon Seix, boy? with him, at the least, the overgrown adviser and contriver of all thine antics, I shall call a strict reckoning,” she said, after some previous words between them.

Lord Thomas made a gleeish signal to his mother of a confidential understanding sought at her hands, and then composing his features, spoke in a voice of mock solemnity, as he turned towards the door by which he had come in, “Enter, Simon, and face my lady mother.”

The ill-contrived figure of Simon, short, thick, and bandy-legged, dragged itself through the doorway, and stood still a few paces past the threshold. His long arms dropt at his sides; his jaw fell; his crooked eye-brows became proportionately elevated; his heavy-lidded eyes turned sideways upon the floor; and al-

together he presented a very ludicrous caricature of repentance, fear, and self-abasement, of which one half was, however, only affected : for, with his young lord for an advocate, he really apprehended no bad consequences.

“So, knave,” the lady began, “neither your respect for my commands, nor your love and fear of the lord of Ormonde, exposed, at this moment, to utmost peril, can keep you within the castle, with Lord Thomas, sage and sedate, as the time requires him and you to be?”

Simon whiningly, yet with a certain sly expression of tone and manner, replied—“I wot not, gracious lady, wherefore, at this time, aught is required from Lord Thomas, his father’s son, or from me, his poor, simple servitor and body-man, save the bearing which bespeaks joyousness and trouble past.”

“And why, sirrah, wot you not?”

“Because, by this hour of the day, our good

battle hath surely been fought and won, and a Botiller's foot again planted on the neck of a Desmond," answered Simon, confidently.

"Say you so?" continued the lady, her eyes brightening; "and whence come your tidings, sir?"

"From our common thought of what ever must be the fortunes of the Ormonde against his present foe, lady," said the reputed fool; and while he spoke, he gave his noble foster-brother an anxious sign to second his interested sycophancy, in consequence of which, as well, indeed, as in assertion of what he really felt, the boy answered:

"True, Simon; and it would, in sooth, ill become the Ormonde's only son to show, by wearing of a sad face this evening, a doubt of his own gallant father."

"List, excellent lady!" adjured Simon, "his nobleness repeats the very words which drew me from the castle by his side."

"Peace, knave!" said the lady, her face, voice, and manner suddenly changing into

great energy as she heard the well-known sounds of lowering the draw-bridge before the principal gate in the walls of the castle : “Nay,” by my holy saint !” she went on rapidly, while a burst of wailing voices reached her from the hall below—“here I have been sinfully bandying words with an idiot, at the moment that I should have bent my knee to heaven ! Who comes to greet us ? who waits below ?” she cried, pacing towards a side-door of the gallery ; and she was about to issue through it, when the sound of many feet echoed on the lobby without. She paused, and grew pale. Presently old John Seix, the father of Simon, completely clad in mail, and looking jaded and agitated, presented himself before her ; the few servants left in the castle crowded at his back. Her eyes met his, and during their short but eloquent glance, she drew in her lips hard, crossed one hand over her bosom, and with the other, extended at full length, motioned him to speak.

“The noble Ormonde lives, dear lady,” answered the old man; and there he paused.

“But the battle is lost, John Seix?” she said, apparently with calmness. Evasively he replied, that his lord, in quick retreat upon Kilkenny, close prest by the Desmond, had despatched him to bid his lady summon the citizens of the town to arms; that some of them might help to garrison the castle, and some hasten to join his army at Green’s-bridge, half a mile up the river, where he purposed making a last brave stand against his old foe.

“All things shall be tried,” answered his lady: and thereupon she despatched one domestic to the civil authorities of the town, over whom the house of Ormonde held despotic sway; and another, to the steeple, which held the great clock, in the courtyard, with orders to ring the alarum. “John Seix,” she resumed, walking up and down the gallery—“however may betide this last struggle at the bridge, I

give way to no fears for the dear and precious life of the Ormonde; supposing him a war-prisoner at the present moment, a Desmond hath never lived who dares to harm a hair of his head."

"Nor ever shall live, to but think of it, mother," said the almost infant Lord Thomas, coming to her side and taking her hand; his childish tears, which had flowed at John Seix's first news, being now almost dried up. She raised him in her arms and pressed him to her bosom, but she did not weep. After setting him on the floor again, she continued:

"No, old and faithful servant; I fear not the poor Desmond on my lord's account; but—should he a second time prove fortunate at yonder bridge, and afterwards break his rude way into our castle, here—then, John Seix, ungarrisoned and lone as we are—then would I fear him on mine own account."

"And wherefore, mother?" demanded the

boy at her side, while old Seix sighed heavily and assentingly.

“It needs not that I inform you of the broad grounds of my fear,” she resumed, still addressing her old house-steward: “before my marriage with my noble lord, you remember his bold pretensions to my favour—they were plain to all the world: nathless, no living creature, save myself, can now tell you the especial reason why—woman, wife, lady and—mother, as I am”—her accents trembled; she stopt her rapid walk, and put her hand on her son’s head, while he looked up into her face most intently, though not as if he comprehended her present discourse—“the especial reason why my soul begins to shrink before the Desmond.”—

“Hark to the noise which comes faintly down the river, lady,” said, to her great surprise, Simon Seix, the half-fool, speaking seriously and steadily, as he gracelessly moved from a corner in which he had hitherto been standing

unnoticed, though, perhaps, not without noting all he saw and heard; and edging round by the wall, approached the end window of the gallery.

“ Ay, and so it does !” exclaimed his mistress, hurrying to the point of observation before him : “ and, for the nonce, Simon, well have you spoken.”

She gained the open window. Quick as a flash, her glance shot at once up the river, to the bridge, and there fixed itself. The October evening began to close in, and it was sunless and heavy; yet the twilight did not so much prevail as to hinder her from distinguishing the general features of things at a good distance.

The faint shouting and uproar still came down the Nore: but nothing to interest her as yet occurred upon the bridge. In a very short time, however, the wild tumult growing louder, she saw a large body of armed men pour over it, rapidly and in disarray; and some rallied at

the country side of the bridge, some between its battlements, and some at its town side. The lady of Ormonde knew that these were her husband's men, hotly pursued by the Desmond; and that they now prepared to make the last stand of which old Scix had spoken to her. Nor were they allowed much time to prepare themselves; nor did they long resist the fierce attack of their assailants. The particular incidents of the struggle she could not see; but in the furious shouts of the Desmond, at first confident and insulting, and then cruel and triumphant; in the haughty blasts of their trumpets; in the gradual receding from the bridge of her lord's bands, as those of his enemy thronged thick upon it; and in the frequent plunge of men and horses into the river, at that point evidently possessed at first by her friends:—in all these occurrences, the unhappy lady saw, too plainly, signs of discomfiture and of woe to her husband, his child, and herself.

Old Scix, watching her from the interior of

the gallery, needed nothing but her action, and the expression of her countenance, to tell him the issue of the fray, and to impart to his own bosom the successive emotions which agitated hers. When she first looked out from the window, he knew by her bending attitude, extended neck, and unwinking eyes, that, as yet, she saw nought which she had expected to see. Suddenly, in answer to the rush of the Ormondes over the bridge, she stood upright, and clenched her hands at her sides : then she bent low again, and her fingers grasped her knees ; and then she started, a second time, to her full height, stamped with one foot, waved an arm round her head with a quick, chucking action of impatient command : and, finally, in observance of a termination which has not been described by us, she threw up her hands, locked them together, and dropped her head between her arms.

“ All is over, lady of Ormonde ? ” demanded Seix.

“ It is, John,” she answered ; “ our base

hinds fly like poor deer they are only fit to tend, scattered and wild, over the distant country.”

“ Do the Desmonds pursue ?” again asked the house-steward.

“ Gallantly !” replied the lady ; “ and all in a body—not a man stays on the bridge.”

“ Then we have some pause, dear mistress ; since none of them hasten this way.”

“ Ay, I grant you, if our townsmen enter the castle in time. But where linger they ? false, bourgeois churls ! Begone, thou, John Seix, and assay to rouse their sluggish spirit ! But no—hold an instant—it may—it may be so !” She interrupted herself, by speaking these last words in a joyous, hopeful tone, as she again looked up the river.

“ The Ormondes, lady ?” questioned the old man.

“ By Heaven ! I do believe it is, John Seix ! Some five or seven mounted men have parted from the confused body of pursuers and pursued, beyond the bridge—and now regain it—now

spur fiercely over it—and one keeps a-head of the others—and now I lose him and them as they turn into the town—Quick, quick, John Seix, and mount the turret over the grand gate—thither they repair, whoever they be—quick, old man ! I wait you here.”

The house-steward did as he was commanded. In a short time after he had taken his position in the turret, seven horsemen galloped up the ascent which led from the near end of the town to the castle ; and one, of noble bearing, led the rest. But as it was now deep twilight, and as the riders kept their vizors down, he could not, at a first look, pronounce whether they were friends or foes. Coming nearer, he fixed his glance upon a banner which they bore, and his heart beat with joy, for it was the banner of the Ormonde. He challenged them, as they pulled their reins before the gate ; they, one and all, shouted the gladdening word ; and he hastened from the turret to admit them within the walls of the castle.

Meantime, his lady impatiently, pantingly, awaited his return to the gallery. Leaving the window, she cast herself at first into a seat : then quickly arose : paced the gallery ; stopped ; listened ; took her son's hand, and rapidly walked with him to the door at the remote end.

She had again heard the unbarring of the gate, and the lowering of the drawbridge. Now she distinguished hasty steps ascending through the castle to the gallery. A few paces from the end door, she stood still : a knight clad in full armour entered. In height and figure, he resembled her husband : but his vizor was down. Upon that she fixed her eye. An instant passed in silence, neither moving. The knight slowly raised his hand, and put up his vizor—it was the Desmond !

She did not scream nor start, nor even step back, for her heart had misgiven her, and spared her a surprise which might have betrayed the heroic lady into some weakness which she would have scorned to show.

“I know you, Desmond,” she only said, nodding her head, and endeavouring to look down his deep and fearful stare; “ay, and I knew you, before you put your hand to your casque.”

“You did, Petronilla?” he asked in a low voice.

“Call me by my better name, here in mine own castle, Desmond;—the lady of Ormonde is that name; none other have you license to utter; and then tell me, what would Piers Gerald of Desmond with the lady of Ormonde—with her, and with her son, whom she holds by the hand?”

“It pleases me,” he answered evasively, “that you knew me, as you say.”

“And wherefore should it?”

“Because the knowledge so little angered you towards me, when I feared far otherwise of our meeting, lady of this castle.”

“And is that all? Then I tell you, Desmond, build nought upon such a seeming. Learn,

rather, that there be some in the world, who deeply feel, though they despise much outward show of *what* they feel ; and who leave actions in the stead of words to decide between them and those they love or hate, honour or spurn."

"And 'tis well, passing well, that thus calmly we *do* meet," he resumed ; "for it hits the fashion of the time, and the change of——"

"Of what?" she interrupted, for a woman, almost sternly—"the change of what? what change? Think you, Desmond, that for an hour's mishap, the first he ever knew from *your* hand, at the least—the lord of Ormonde, or I, his wife, will brook that word? think you that spirit bends or snaps so soon? think you that the cowards who fled from you on yonder bridge make a tithe of the Ormonde's truer and loyaler vassals and fighting men? or, granting that he stood alone to-night, in some nook of his own wide lands, think you no other friends may be near, although come from far, to take his part

and give you back to him, hand to hand, and foot to foot?"

"What other friends?" asked Desmond.

"Hark in your ear—true English friends! ay, Desmond, and with one who loves the Ormonde to bid them on—with England's king to bid them on!" she continued exultingly.

"Who hides behind this arras, to witness our discourse?" demanded Desmond, striding to the place of which he spoke, his hand placed on his sword.

"Harm not my poor jester, black Desmond!" cried the little Lord Thomas, springing after him from his mother's side; "none but he, Simon Seix, the half-witted, is there, and he has only crept behind the arras to sleep."

The child pulled aside the arras as he spoke, and discovered, indeed, Simon Seix sitting behind it, his clumsy, bony knees crippled up into his mouth, and his whole figure curiously twisted into the smallest possible size, while he seemed, at least, to sleep profoundly.

“ Bid him awaken, and to the hall with you, for pastime, my brave man,” said Desmond, shaking Simon with his mailed hand till he opened his eyes, uttering a strange cry, and starting to his feet. “ May they not leave the gallery, lady ?” resumed Desmond : “ our speech grows of import.”

“ But surely of no value to an infant and a simpleton,” answered the lady of Ormonde ; “ wherefore, Desmond, they may not leave the gallery for the hall.”

“ Dicken Utlaw, my proved body-man, will there do service and ward upon your fair son,” continued Desmond.

“ And *is* he there? *he*? Dicken Utlaw, your *proved* body-man?” asked the lady. “ I know of him; in my days of unwedded youth, I had a reason to know of him, the which you can tell; and, oh! heaven forgive you, Desmond, the intents, in furtherance of which you bring the stony-hearted Dicken into this castle !”

“ If the child and the fool are to rest here,” rejoined Desmond, “ I pray you let it be at the end of the gallery, out of hearing.”

To this she assented, and the young Lord Thomas and Simon Seix accordingly withdrew to the window.

“ And now, lady, touching your wild speech of the English king’s coming to Ireland——”

“ He lands to-day, at Waterford, Desmond; ’tis as wild as that—England’s second Richard—at Waterford.”

“ Hush!” cried Desmond, as he perceived that Simon had again drawn near them, alone, so cautiously, that his steps were not heard: “ now, sirrah, do you dare to pry into the discourse of your lady and myself?”

Simon humbly and earnestly denied any such bold and sinful design; and reproved and chidden, he again withdrew, while Desmond went on with what he had to say.

“ Lady, ’tis passing strange I should not have heard of this: but, let the king be at

Waterford; I shall have loyal friends to wait on him there before midnight: you can have none—”

“The Ormonde may think of having some there, before midnight, Desmond.”

“Alack the day, lady!” said Desmond, sighing.

“Ha!” she cried, receding from him, “when *you* put on that seeming grief, there must be a black tale for me to hear, in good sooth!—Speak, man! you have jumped upon his body, —laid prostrate by thousands for you,—and then passed your coward knife through his noble heart.”

“The Ormonde forced me to the field, lady, in just defence of my bounds of lands; but, otherwise, I bore him no ill blood: his life I never sought; and, had I seen it threatened, would have saved it: but the last *melée* was fierce upon the bridge, and he fell ere I knew that——”

“Dead! my Ormonde dead?” she cried,

clasping her hands, and fixing her eyes on Desmond.

“ I bore his banner to your gate—please you to see it in the hall?—Could he have drawn living breath when that was done?”

“ I think, no,” she answered; “ and you have reached him, then? And now, Desmond, ’tis in your mind that all looks clear for the fulfilling of an old oath.”—Stern despair was in her tones, as she uttered these words.

“ Sweet lady, pass we that worthless matter—an error of mere youth, and nought besides—unless we add an outbreking of passionate love, as pure and true as——”

“ Insolent fool as well as villain!” again interrupted the lady: where are you, boy? Come hither to my side, and hold fast by my hand—hither, hither! ha!” as she turned round, and looked towards the end of the spacious and dusky apartment. “ My child hath left the gallery—with his poor fool, too! and left it, for what company!—for what chances!

Desmond, I leave you to go seek him ; and aid me in the task ; and promise not to part us, when I find my boy, and I will kneel down to bless you."

Terrible fears of Desmond's designs began to press on her mind, and, she scarce knew what she said. Her unwelcome visitor earnestly promised to do as she requested of him ; and they left the gallery by different doors. Desmond hastened to the hall, where taking Utlaw aside, he said to him in a whisper—" Dicken, if by some secret outlet the young spawn of the Ormonde hath evaded us, we nearly lose our present game. Search well the courts and outbuildings——"

The calls and cries of the afflicted mother, echoing through the castle, interrupted his speech. She rushed into the hall, still uttering the name of her child. " You have murdered him, too !" she exclaimed, wildly, stopping before Desmond. " Ay, you ! even while we spoke, above, some devils in your service

spirited him away. Give place !” She darted past him, and left the hall, to engage in another search.

Desmond followed close in her steps to receive the child, for himself, if he should be found. His confidential follower explored every hiding-place out of doors. None of them succeeded : and then Dicken and some trusty comrades mounted their horses to ride to the town, and through all the surrounding country.

Half-an-hour before the lady of Ormonde missed them, Simon Seix, stealing on tiptoe to the nearest side-door, had carried the child out of the gallery in his arms. By private and obscure passages which, as he whispered to his young charge, the Desmond’s men would not be found to have yet mounted guard upon, they then gained nearly the same spot, under the window of the long gallery, where, some hours before, he had enacted, together, the parts of battle-charger and of trumpeter to the little Lord Thomas. Here he put the boy on

his feet, and stooped down upon the terra-plane of the wall. "John, the father of Simon, showed it to me more than once," he said: and, while speaking, he contrived to loosen a small stone, and extract it from the surrounding ones. A ring appeared: he tugged at it with all his strength, and a square portion of the smooth, small flags, moved, were displaced, and discovered narrow steps winding down in darkness through the thickness of the wall.

"Now, noble son of the noble Ormonde, and most noble foster-brother of a born natural, remember all you promised me while we whispered together at the window over our heads," resumed Simon.—"Here be the steps which will free us of the castle; and, though it seemeth somewhat dark a little way downward, still trust to my guidance; for the sake of thy dear lady-mother, and of thy——"

"I am not afraid, witless," interrupted the child; "take my hand, and lead me after you."

Without another word, Simon safely conveyed him to the bottom of the turning steps. Here they stood in utter darkness; the misnamed fool groping with his two hands over the rough surface which temporarily opposed their further progress. A joyful exclamation soon told, however, that he had found what he sought; and the next moment a part of the wall, (here but of slight thickness,) framed in iron, moved inward on hinges, and they saw, through a low arched opening, only a few feet from them, the river, whose rapid dash and chafe had come on their ears as they descended.

A rugged bank, often interrupted by eddies and little coves of the river, fell from the foundation of the wall into the Nore. Along this, his back turned to John's bridge and the town, and his young foster-brother once more astride on his shoulders, Simon was soon hurrying. The wall made an abrupt turn, striking off at right angles, inland: he turned with it, and still pursued its course.

“There is the paddock, truly; but where is my lord’s favourite horse for the chase?” he said, after having made considerable way—
“nay, I see him—and now for a hard ride, without saddle, and a *suggaun* bridle in hand.”

Some hay was piled in the paddock: from it he adroitly and quickly spun his *suggaun*—fastened it on the head of the fleet courser—placed the child on the animal’s back—vaulted up behind him—and a few minutes, over hedge and ditch, brought them to a highway.

“For Waterford, Raymond!” cried Simon, shaking his hay bridle: “and we have need to see the end of the twenty-and-four Irish miles in little more time than it will take to count them over.

“’Tis well to be a fool, ay, and a sleepy fool, too, at times, Simon, else neither Raymond, nor his riders for him, would know the road so well,” said the child.

“There be tricks in all born crafts, your little nobleness,” replied Simon; “else how would fools, or even wise men, win bread! In sooth, I deemed I might catch a needful secret behind the arras; though I wot not of the road till I bethought me of treading lightly back from the window to hear another word.”

It was night—but a moonlight one—when the hoofs of their courser beat hollowly along the banks of the Suir: they had avoided the town, and followed the widening of the river a little distance beyond it. Unpractised as were his eyes to such a sight, Simon soon was aware that a great many ships floated on the moonlit water; that boats moved to and from them; and that large bodies of soldiers, destined for taking the field against the formidable young Irish chief, Arthur Mac Murchad O’Kavanah, were every moment landing. While he looked, a sentinel challenged him. He reined up his foaming horse, and answered, by giving the name of the Lord Thomas of Ormonde, and

demanding to see the king. The soldier scoffed at his request; and, as Simon insisted, his words grew rough and high. A group of noble looking men, who, from a near elevation of the bank, had been watching the disembarkment, were attracted towards the spot; and one, a knight completely clad in splendid armour, advanced, alone, from the rest, saying, "The Lord Thomas of Ormonde to have speech of the king!—where bides this Lord Thomas, master mine?"

"I am the Lord Thomas of Ormonde!" answered Simon's little charge, spiritedly, and as if in dudgeon that he had not been at once recognised.

"Thou, gramercy, fair noble!" continued the knight, good-naturedly, as he touched his helmet. "And on what weighty matter wouldst thou parley with King Richard?"

"An you lead me to him, like a civil knight and good, Richard himself shall learn," replied the child.

“Excellent well spoken,” whispered Simon to his charge; “abide by that fashion of speech.”

“By our lady, then, like civil knight and good, will I do my devoir by thee, Lord Thomas of Butler,” resumed the knight; “little doubting that the king will give ready ear to thy errand, for passing well he affects one of thy name, the Lord James, Earl of Ormonde.”

“Which noble earl is mine own father,” said the boy.

The knight showed real interest at this intelligence: and commanding the horse which bore Simon and the child to be led after him, walked towards the town of Waterford.

Half-an-hour afterwards, mounted on a fresh steed, and accompanied by their patron and a body of well-armed soldiers, our adventurers galloped back to Kilkenny. The knight had pressed their stay till morning; but Lord Thomas and Simon convinced him that for the

sake of the lady of Ormonde this ought not to be. She required not only to have her son restored to her, but also to be protected against the Desmond, who, ere morning's dawn, might work her irremediable harm. Finding these reasons good, the friendly knight resolved to bear them company.

Upon the road, he arranged with Simon various plans of proceeding; and upon a particular point was wholly governed by the simpleton's advice. Simon said that there was but one vassal of the Desmond in Kilkenny castle, who, after the tidings they had to communicate, would at all hazards attempt to spill blood. "Then can ye not make free with his, before I enter the castle-hall?" demanded the knight. Simon demurred, but proposed an alternative.—"We will make him drunk with wines, till he sleeps soundly," said Simon; "and then, upon hearing of my signal, a child may enter the hall."

The knight assented; but added, "Good

success still rests upon the chance of the Desmond's army not having yet marched from the field to greet their lord in the Ormonde's fortress; for, though our liege comrades here may well suffice to master the knaves already within its walls, they could not withstand thousands."

Notwithstanding this chance against them, the travellers held on, however, and by midnight gained the secret door, through which Simon had escaped from the castle wall upon the rough and scanty bank of the Nore. Previously, all had dismounted, and, conducted by him, were now ushered, stealthily, into the interior of the castle; and their hopes grew high, when it appeared evident that Desmond's army had not yet come to garrison it.

Few moments then elapsed until Simon entered the hall of the castle, leading his foster-brother by the hand. By the light of a tripod, suspended from the arched roof, he saw his old father stretched on the tiled floor, mourn-

fully supporting his head upon his hand, and guarded by a soldier; at the oak table, immediately under a Scottish broadsword and buckler, won by the Ormonde, some years before, in a battle against the Bruce, when that chieftain made pretensions to the crown of Ireland, sat Dicken Utlaw, the man whom Simon had meant when he spoke of the single follower of Desmond, whose hand would be prompt to shed the blood even of his liege king, in defence of his lord, or in revenge of his discomfiture. A wine cup and a flagon stood at the ruffian's hand, by means of which he had already anticipated, half way, Simon's designs upon him.

Utlaw's voice was high and angry, as the two truants appeared before him; and in fact, he was roundly expressing his wrath against them for the useless chase they had led him over all the neighbouring roads, and from which he had only lately returned. So soon as his eyes met theirs, he started up, roaring forth commands to the armed man who stood guard over old Seix, to secure the door of the hall.

"It does not need," answered the boy; "we come hither to be your prisoners, good Dicken."

"Ay, thou vagrant imp! and whence come ye so suddenly, after all our chase, as if ye grew out of the ground, or were blown in upon a wind?" asked Utlaw.

"Perchance even as thou sayest, we come," answered Simon, "for, all this evening, we have footed it merrily with the fays of Brandon hill; and be patient now, sweet Dicken Utlaw," as the bravo raised his sheathed sword, "and but suffer us to enact for your pleasure one of the good dances they taught us, and I will bribe my father here, the house-steward, to whisper thee in what corner of the cellar thou mayest chance on a magnum of such renowned wine as has scarce filled to night the empty flagon at thy hand."

Dicken became somewhat soothed; and growling an exhortation to the sentinel to guard all his prisoners well, strode off to

avail himself of the ready instructions of old Seix. During his short absence, Simon studied the features of the soldier who rested on his tall spear near the door, and drew comfort from their tranquil and even benevolent expression. Utlaw returned to his seat at the oak table, called the wine good, and gulped it down rapidly: it was of great power, and Simon knew the fact well. But it also seemed capable of making him obliging, for he consented to see the fashion of the dance practised by the hill-elves; and accordingly, Simon, with a whisper to the child, performed a vagary so grotesque that the drunken savage laughed hoarsely in his cup, and the guard smiled quietly on his post.

Simon continued his frolics, till the critical powers of Dicken began rapidly to desert him. Very soon afterwards, he slept profoundly, snorting like the swine he was. Simon now preparing for his most important feat, proposed that Lord Thomas should take

a war-horse; namely, an old weapon at hand, and ride it about the hall to the notes of the trumpet. The boy was soon mounted, and Simon taking up an useless scroll of parchment, and rolling it loosely, applied it to his mouth.

Before he would blow his signal blast, however, he glanced into the face of the sentinel, and afterwards to the half open door of the hall. The man was still smiling good-naturedly at the gleeish gambols of the little Lord Thomas; and, in the gloom without the hall, Simon caught glimpses of armed men; one of whom presently entered, unseen by the soldier, and bent watchfully over the snoring Dicken.—“Now to the charge!” cried Simon, addressing his foster-brother; and to the astonishment of the sentinel, of the knight who had just stealthily come in (Simon’s friend at Waterford)—and of every one in the castle—a perfect trumpet sound rang through the spacious building.

Dicken sprang to his feet, half conscious, and was instantly felled to the ground by a blow of the knight's battle-axe, who had been watching him. Old Seix arose, and seized his sword.—Simon armed himself with the weapon upon which the child had been astride, and placed himself spiritedly, though grotesquely, before him. The sentinel quickly brought his spear to his hip, and stood upon the defensive, regarding the stranger knight (who wore his vizor down) with a threatening look; but a second knight now gaining that person's side, rendered his hostility vain. Almost at the same moment, an uproar and a clash was heard through the castle—presently the lady of Ormonde ran shrieking into the hall,—and she shrieked wildly again, though not in the same cadence, as she caught up her child to her bosom. She was quickly followed by Desmond, now the prisoner of some of Simon's friends. The bold lord had fought desperately, and bled from his wounds, though

the rage which was upon him did not allow him to think of them.

“What treachery is this? and what villains be these?” he exclaimed, as he came in: “who calls himself chief here?”

The knight who wore his vizor down raised his arm, and touched his breast, in answer.

“Then call thyself by such name no longer!” continued Desmond; and with that he suddenly freed himself from his guards, snatched the sentinel’s long spear, and aimed a thrust at the knight.

“Traitor! stay thy hand!” exclaimed his antagonist, in a voice of high and dignified command; “thou knowest not what thou doest—nor that indeed, thy feudal sceptre is here broken in pieces—Look at me now!” He exposed his face.

“Richard, the king!” faltered Desmond, dropping on his knee, as the lady of Ormonde and all in the hall knelt with him.

THE HALF - BROTHERS.

THE HALF-BROTHERS.

LUCY HAWKINS, at sixteen, was the belle, if not the beauty, of her little sea-washed village on the coast of Kent. Other girls might boast a more perfect shape and handsomer features; but her effect, her expression, or—if a fashionable French word may, with allowances, be applied to a lowly maiden—her *tourneur* eclipsed them all. She was also celebrated for a vivacity of manner and conversation unusual amongst young females of her class; nay, in the opinions of a numerous circle of good judges, who constantly

enjoyed her company and discourse, Lucy Hawkins deserved to be termed witty.

Her mother kept the post-office of the village, together with a general huckster's shop, and a hotel in one of her out-houses for very humble wanderers or sojourners—beds threepence per night. Upon a large deal chest, the good dame's flour-store, which stood under her shop window, opposite to her counter, hard-worked labourers, employed in the neighbourhood, would sit and eat their four penny-worth of bread and cheese, and drink their half pint of small-beer, by way of the morning's or afternoon's meal; and Lucy generally served them, or else stood by while they were served, and, at the same time, her good humour materially helped to give zest to their meagre breakfast or dinner. At the upper end of the counter was a rush-bottomed, curiously-legged, old oak chair, a fixture, put forward for any chatty neighbour or visitor who might like an hour's gossiping:

and since its establishment it had, indeed, seldom been left empty, as was indicated, even during its leisure moments, by a little round cavity worn in the tiled floor, just at the spot where its successive occupants necessarily rested their heels. And with the revelers on the chest, and the numerous patrons of this oak chair, to say nothing of ordinary customers and her own particular friends, Lucy became quite a public character, and, as has been hinted, quite a favourite. The poor people, who, towards night, crept through the shop to their straw beds over the hen-house in the yard, also shared her sparkling conversation, and acknowledged its cheery influence.

And there were other visitors who also admitted her attractions, though it would have been better for Lucy if we could limit her encomiastic friends to those already mentioned. Over one department of the manifold concern she had absolute sway; her mother did not

know how to read hand-writing, and, considering the frequency of almost illegible superscriptions on the backs of letters, the deputation of authority alluded to became a matter of prudence, if not of necessity. At the inquiry of every claimant for letters "to be left till called for," it was Lucy, therefore, who always unlocked the little rude deal box—about the size and much in the shape of a salt-box—which, clumsily nailed against the wooden pane with the slit in the shop-window, formed the whole apparatus of the post-office branch of the establishment.

Many officers of the preventive-service, although they had abundance of unemployed men to go to Mrs. Hawkins's shop in their stead, would call in every morning to ask for their letters; and at different hours of their idle day return to purchase a quarter of an ounce of Scotch snuff, or something else of which they could have less use, such as a row of pins, a yard of tape, or a reel of thread. In fact, it became

evident that three of them were rivals for the smiles of Lucy Hawkins.

Two of the three soon ensured to themselves, however, anything but her smiles. For offences separately received at their hands, she invariably left the shop whenever they entered it; and as Lucy's conduct was not a mere show of female anger, they absented themselves, and gave up their unmanly pursuit. The third, whose visits were still received, was more seriously in love with Lucy than either of his friends; but, whether from a nicer sense of honour, or that the fate of the others had taught him a lesson, Lieutenant Stone did not lightly or hastily tell her so. Much younger than his rivals, perhaps he was more romantic, and, particularly since Lucy's late specimen of self-assertion, would not indulge his admiration with a view to any mean indulgence of it. And, in fact, when, after sitting in the shop, upon the flour-chest, or in the old chair, day after day for more than six months, he at last whispered

his sentiments to Lucy, the declaration sounded seriously and respectfully to her ear, and, she concluded, could be made only in one hope—that of obtaining her hand, with the due consent of father and mother.

The scene must now be very abruptly changed, with a breach of the three unities of time, place, and action.

Twelve years after Lucy Hawkins accepted the suit of her chosen lover, we enter a small wooden house, indeed a very poor shed, in another little sea-coast hamlet, many miles distant from her native one. The walls of its only sitting-room, a kitchen, are bare; the floor is tiled; and the few articles of indispensable furniture are old, common, and crazy: and yet the poor apartment looks clean, or, to use an humble, but expressive and very English word, tidy. A woman, as ill-clad as her house is ill-appointed, but, like it, tidy too, sits on a stool, teaching a sturdy, sun-burnt boy of seven years to read out of a  Reading Made Easy. She

seems about forty, but may be much younger than she looks, for her composed features would suggest long acquaintance with misfortune—the often successful anticipator of time’s utmost efforts to destroy. A half-finished female dress, of materials too costly, and of shape too fashionable, to be destined to the use of the lowly occupant of the lowly abode, lies, together with the little implements of woman’s industry, upon a table at her side, hinting the mode of pursuit by which she earns scanty bread for her young pupil and herself.

The task is over, and Billy is kissed and called a good boy: and while his mother combs his yellow hair in smooth and equal portions towards either temple—“There, my king,” she says; and now, where is brother to take you out to play?”

“The naughty great boys were *quarrelling* Charley on the shingles, mother, when he sent Billy home to his task to be rid of them.”

“And what game did they quarrel over, Billy?”

“ No ga-om, mother; but Dick Saunders called Charley a bad name.”

“ Tell mother the bad name, my man.”

“ Billy caunt—he doesn’t know it now, mother.”

Their conversation was interrupted by the quick entrance of Charley himself. The moment his mother saw him, she uttered an alarmed cry. His clenched hands were thrust into his trowsers’ pockets; he frowned, for the first time in his life his mother had seen him do so; his lips quivered; tears glazed his eyes; his face, nay, his forehead and ears, flamed scarlet, and blood trickled down his cheeks. Obviously, he had been fighting a hard battle, but, as obviously, was the victor. The boy was about twelve.

“ Let Billy go play at the door, and I’ll tell you, mother,” he said, after she had addressed many anxious inquiries to him.

She led the little fellow out, and shut the door upon herself and Charley. He dropt in a

chair, flung his arms over the table, laid his face upon them, and burst into a furious fit of crying.

“Naughty Dick Saunders has hurt you, Charley, mother’s darling !” she cried, approaching him.

“No—not as well as I have hurt *him*—the story-teller ! the puppy !” sobbed Charles. “Mother, Dick Saunders spoke ill of me, and of you.”

“What did he say, Charley?”

“I can’t repeat it after him—I won’t. But, mother, I be old enough to ask you what I’m going to ask—Was Master Turner, who died last year, Billy’s father?”

“To be sure he was, Charley.” She grew uneasy.

“And your husband?”

“Yes.”

“And *my* father too?”

She changed colour, and dropped her eyes beneath the deep glance of her child.

“Now, Charley, I know what they said of you and me; and the time is indeed come for me to speak to you of what nearly concerns you.”

“Did Dick Saunders tell no story, mother?” interrupted Charley, sitting upright, and again unconsciously scrutinising her face. She raised her eyes, met his for an instant, and then sank back in her chair, covering her features with her hands, and weeping dolefully.

“I ask pardon, mother,” said the generous and hitherto gentle boy, as he gained her side, and put his arms round her neck: “you always loved me, and I shall always love you, let them say what they will of us. Kiss Charley, mother, won’t you?”

Fondly, almost wildly, she embraced him, and resumed. “No, Charley—Master Turner, my husband, was *not* your father: stop a moment.” She stepped into her little bed-room; returned with a small, square, red-leather case; placed it in his hand; sat down; averted her

head; began to move the work on the table, and would vainly hide her continued tears, as she added, "Open that, and you will know more of your father."

While he obeyed her commands, Charley recollected that he had more than once detected his mother weeping over the little red-leather case. When the miniature met his eye, the boy started.

"My father was a ship's captain!" he cried.

"He was an officer in the king's navy," she answered.

"And a gentleman, mother?"

"His commission made him one, Charley; but he would have been a true gentleman without it."

"And he married you before Master Turner married you, mother?"

"Charley, your father and I never were married."

A pause ensued. Charley's features betrayed a bitter and a fierce inward combat, as his glance still fixed on the miniature.

“Is he dead?” he at length asked.

“I hope not, but I am not sure. Sometimes I think one thing, sometimes another. Listen, my king. I was very young when I met your father; and I wondered, and many others wondered, what he could see in me to love. I was his inferior in every way. To be sure, my poor mother had managed to keep me at good schools till I was a great girl, and perhaps this made me something in his eyes. Then, when we began to keep company, with father's and mother's consent, he taught me, like a master, himself, a great many things that improved my mind and my manners, ay, and my heart too; but I am not going on with my story. We were to be married at the end of two years. Before the first year came round he was ordered from the blockade-service to a ship, at only a few hours' notice. He ran down to our shop, and showing the letter, prayed mother to let us be made man and wife that very evening. She would not hear

of it, saying I was too young, and did not know my own mind, and would not know how to behave as his wife. He begged and prayed once again, and cried tears, and went on his knees; she held firm to her word. But, alas! Charley, it had been doing better if she had not held so firm to it, or else not have left us alone to take leave of each other that evening. And next day, ay, before it was day, your father left our village, and I have never seen him since."

"But he has sent letters to you, mother?"

"I got none, if he did: though I believe he did, and that an enemy kept them from my hands. A very short time after he left us, my father died, my mother grew poor, and we were turned out of our comfortable little house, not being able to pay our rent. The shop was re-opened by a woman and her daughter who bore me no good will, and on your father's account too. He had paid some compliments to the daughter before he met me, and they

blamed me for taking him from them. And—God forgive me if I wrong either mother or daughter—but I do fear that letters from your father to me, and from me to him, were stopt by the new keepers of our post-office. Well, Charley, you were born while my mother and I lived in a very poor way, trying to support ourselves with our needles, and keep out of the workhouse. Your father's silence almost broke my heart. I did not suspect foul play about the letters then; 'tis only lately people gave me some hints, and all I could think was that he had forsaken us both, my king. My mother died too, and you and I were left quite alone, Charley. Years after, when, try as I would or could, we were getting worse and worse off, Master Turner came from his village to ours, on business, and knowing my whole story, asked me to marry him. He was a man well to do in the world at that time, and a kind man too; and so, after giving up all other hopes, I thought, Charley, that, even for your

sake, I ought not to refuse a comfortable home and comfortable living. But it seemed as if every one was to have ill-luck with me. Good Master Turner began to grow poor from that very day, till last year, when he died, leaving us as badly off as he found us; and that's the whole story, Charley; only, here are you and I living alone again, with your little half-brother, Billy, to keep us company.

“Well; and I be glad of his company, mother,” said Charley: “I always loved little Billy for his own sake, and because he loved me”—(the mutual affection of the boys was indeed very remarkable)—“and now, though, as you say, he turns out to be only my half-brother, I'll love him better for his father's sake, who was a friend to you when you wanted a friend. But we must open the door and let him in.”

Billy's voice had been heard calling on Charles to run down with him to the beach,

and see the grand three-masted ship that was passing but a little way out, and, people said, seemed about to send a boat ashore. Ere Charles went to the door, he held out the miniature, and asked, "May I see it often again, mother?"

"Keep it,—'tis your own, Charley-- here"—passing a riband through the loop at its top, "hang it round your neck."

As his mother secured it, he once more felt her tears dropping fast on his head, and looking up into her face, he stole his arms around her.

"Go, now, mother's darlings," as hand in hand they left her humble threshold; "but, Charley, do not stray out far on the sands: it will be a spring-tide, I fear, and the breeze comes fresh from the sea."

Still hand in hand they proceeded on their walk; Billy unusually communicative, and Charles unusually silent. Indeed the younger boy remarked his brother's taciturnity, and

taxed him with it. They met groups of their former playmates in the village-street, whom the child wished to join ; but Charles, chucking him closer to his side, passed them by, knitting his brow and holding up his head. On the shingles appeared other groups, and the young misanthrope would not descend to the water's edge until he had proceeded several hundred yards above their position.

It was a beautiful spring day. The breeze lashed the waves into a sportive fury. Sun and cloud, light and shade, alternated their effects over the wide bosom of the sea, streaking it with gold and pea-green, with dark purple or deep blue. Now a distant sail was a white speck on the horizon, now a spot of dark, dotting a clear sky. The three-master, of which little Billy had spoken, lay-to, about a mile from shore. Charles knew her to be an East-Indiaman. His brother urged him to approach her as closely as the sands permitted. Still wrapt up in his own thoughts and feel-

ings, Charles silently stepped down the shingles, looking jealously around to note if they were alone.

Behind him, as he began to move towards the waves, was a low line of cliff, forming, at a particular point, a jutting platform, from the outward edge of which the continuation of the cliff swept, like a buttress to the shingles. Before him stretched the strand, to nearly the distance of half-a-mile, where it was met by an irregular circle of black rocks, closely wedged together, and enclosing the last patch of sand visible even at low-tide. Charles had not intended to approach this spot; but as he walked in an oblique direction from it, some straggling boys appeared coming against him, and he hastily led his little charge to the convenient screen of the tall rocks.

The tide had for some time been coming in. Often before, however, Charles had ventured farther out, when it was more advanced, and returned to shore with only wet feet and a

splashing. The rocks could not at any point be easily scaled, so high and broad was their barrier ; nor did they admit of ingress into the sandy area they girded, save at a particular spot, sea-ward, where, some feet from their base, appeared a narrow fissure, still difficult of access. Charles therefore walked round them until he gained this opening ; then, assisting his little brother to climb up to it, the two boys soon stood upon a projection inside the rocky belt, and turned their faces towards the sea.

They could perceive, by a bustle on the deck of the Indiaman, now so near to them, that a boat would soon be lowered from her side. They looked out, much interested, until the boat lightly touched the tossing waves near the vessel's prow, and became strongly manned, as if to put off for shore. Still, however, the men rested on their oars, and seemed waiting for some other person to descend. And, in a mood that sympathized with the scene, Charles conti-

nued to watch the boat, dancing to and fro, and sometimes almost jumping out of the water; for the breeze grew stiffer, and the waves rougher. Half an hour he stood motionless, disregarding, for the first time in his life, the prattle of the little boy at his side. At last the individual for whom the boat waited, clad in blue and white, and gold lace, to Billy's great delight, jumped in amongst his men, stood up, at their head, pointed to shore, and was rapidly rowed towards it.

For some time the near roar of waters had been ringing in Charles's ear, but he made light of the warning, for he confidently argued from experience, whenever his thoughts reverted to the matter, that there was still sufficient time to return to the shingles with scarce a wet shoe. But he did not reckon that the spot of sand, with which he now stood enclosed, was much higher than the outer sands which stretched to the bases of the rocks. He did not reckon that the tide, at a certain period of its

flow, after turning a near point of land, usually ran with almost the rapidity of a mill-stream, against the right-hand segment of the barrier, and then, directed by its curve, inundated in a trice the previously open space between it and the shingles. Above all, he did not remember what his mother had hinted at parting; for, indeed, her omen proved true; it was a spring-tide.

The ship's boat, still seen at a distance, glanced athwart the patch of sea revealed through the fissure at which the boys looked out. More alive, after its disappearance, to the unusual noise of the waters, Charley took his brother's hand to lead him home by the way they had come. To his consternation, a fiercely-crested wave leaped into their faces through the narrow opening, drenching both to the skin. He let go Billy's hand, and sprang up to the top of the circular wall of rocks. A foamy sea tossed all around him. His eye caught the

gallant boat, about a quarter of a mile distant. He screamed to it; jumped down to his little brother; dragged him up to the spot he had just quitted, and screamed again. There was a little cavity, formed by the irregular junction, at their sharp extremities, of the rocks, and in this he placed the now bewildered and weeping child, to preserve him from being dashed inward by the quickly increasing sea; and clinging himself to the highest pinnacle he could grasp, once more he wildly hailed the boat.

Most probably he had now caught its notice. It put round and pulled towards him; but soon seemed deterred from venturing too near the dangerous rocks.

“ Oh God!—oh, mother, mother! your Billy! Mother’s darling! *he* at least will be drowned, though I may swim till they pick me up—and all *my* fault!—but no, no!” He pulled off his jacket and waistcoat, and tore his shirt into long strips.—“ No! he shall not!—

Come, Billy ! I will tie you to my back ! never fear, my king—and see if I don't swim like a fish for you !”

The child, having heard and noted all his words and actions, had stopped crying, and, as if struck with Charles's noble conduct and sentiments, and unconsciously sympathizing with them, answered: “ I won't, Charley, I won't;— I should sink you, and we should only be drowned together, then, and no one left with mother.”

All this while breakers had been dashing from without nearly up to the summits of the rocks at the opposite sweep of the circle, and as Charles eagerly, indeed violently renewed his entreaties, they at last came leaping and plunging up to its very edge, like dark, white-maned war-horses, trying to rear and paw over some high and well-guarded embankment. Once again he hoarsely cried out to the boat. It was nearer to him, but still seemed cautious of actual approach. He turned for the last time to Billy,

and seized him in his arms to compel him to do his bidding. The riband which held his father's miniature round his neck snapped in the exertion; the miniature itself was rolling outwardly into the surf; he snatched at it, and secured it, but lost his balance, and the next instant was kicking among the breakers.

The captain of the East-Indiaman had with his pocket-glass witnessed the greater part of the scene between the young brothers, and, as he saw Charles tumble from the rocks, gallantly ordered his men to dare a good deal, and pull towards the spot where the boy had sunk. Presently Charley reappeared, swimming stoutly; not for the boat, however, but back again to the now almost invisible rocks. The captain and his men called to him, but he did not heed them. It has been mentioned that when the boys walked out to the sands, they directly turned their backs upon a platform in a low line of cliff. At that moment, not only the platform and its rugged buttress-base, but the

shingles beneath, were perfectly dry. Now the raging surf of a spring-tide, excited by a stiff breeze, foamed up to the level of the former : and almost simultaneously with Charley's reappearance, a woman, screaming loudly, descended the difficult passage from the brow of the cliff, and gained the slippery shelf. Many people followed her to the top line of the precipice, but no one ventured to her side. Her cries reached the young swimmer, through all the roar of the sea, and he redoubled his vain efforts to reach his little brother. But very soon exertion became useless. At one enraged and reinforced charge of the breakers, the area enclosed by the rocky circle, hitherto little intruded on, was inundated, and no part of the black barrier-line remained visible, except that formed by the pinnacles amid which the child stood wedged : a curling chain of foam supplied its place. And now, his mother from the shore, his brother from the sea, and the captain and his men from their boat, witnessed the conduct

of the little sufferer. He had been sitting ; he stood up : a breaker struck him ; he staggered : another came ; he fell, disappeared : was still seen, however, upon a point of rock, raising his hands, and clapping them over his head, until at the third blow the little fellow became engulfed in the whirling waters.

The boat was now very near to Charles ; and, at last, seemingly attentive to the remonstrance of its crew, he turned, and languidly swam towards its side.

“ What the deuce has the young grampus fished up between his teeth ? ” said the captain, as he assisted in reaching out an oar ; “ a boiled crab, I reckon ; though, where they got a fire to boil it, at the bottom of this surf, is more than I can imagine.”

Charles was dragged into the boat, and without a word or a cry fell stupified upon its bottom. The miniature dropped from his unclenched teeth ; the captain took it up, opened it, and startled his men by uttering a loud ex-

clamation. Then he stooped to Charley's face, and peered into it; then glanced to the cliff; and, finally, ordering every oar to pull for the shingles, he knelt on one knee, raised Charley's head to the other; and his crew were still more surprised to see their bluff captain embrace the almost senseless lad, kiss his cheeks and forehead, and weep over him profusely, though in silence.

The boat had not shot far, when little Billy floated ahead. The captain gently, though hastily, put Charles down, and with much energy assisted in picking up the child, who soon lay stretched beside his half-brother, rescued indeed from the sea, but, it seemed evident, quite dead. Still the captain cried, "Pull, men, pull!"

Vigorously and skilfully obeying his orders, they ran the lively boat upon the shingles, a good distance below the point at which the low cliff gradually dipped to their surface. The mother flew down to meet her children and

their unknown friends. The anxious crowd followed her. She received Charley from the captain's arms; a sailor followed, holding Billy, wrapped in the captain's jacket, to his bosom. At her first word the elder boy opened his eyes; after straining him to her heart she flew to his brother. No word had effect upon him. The captain called out for a surgeon: the village practitioner and the blockade surgeon were both at hand. They caused the child to be conveyed into a neighbouring cottage, and there, in the presence of the mother and the captain, promptly engaged in all the usual measures for restoring animation: but all failed. They repeated their exertions, still without effect; and at length, pronouncing Billy to be a corse, left the cottage.

Charles had been stretched across the foot of the bed upon which, wrapped in blankets, lay his little half-brother. At first he did not comprehend his situation, or notice the occurrences around him. Now, however, he seemed to

hear the departing words of the surgeons, for, raising himself upon his elbow, he gazed first into his mother's face, as she sat in silent anguish by the bedside, and then he tried to move upward towards Billy. While making this effort, the captain, gently laying his hand on the mother's shoulder, asked to speak aside with her. She arose, in the languid indifference of grief, and followed him into a corner of the room, out of view of the bed. "Lucy!" was the captain's only word, soothingly whispered at her ear. She drew back, looked up into his face, and was supported in his arms. A brief explanation proved that her suspicions of her revengeful rival at the village post-office were well-founded. While, from the suppression of the captain's letters to her, Lucy had believed him cruel and faithless, the holding back, also, of her letters to him had caused her sincere lover to conclude that she was no better than a village-coquette, who, the moment he left her presence, forgot him, and insulted his memory

and his devotion in the smiles of a new admirer ; perhaps in the smiles of more than one. Hence, after her seeming silence of many years, he had proudly struggled to give up Lucy Hawkins for ever ; and though, since their parting, he could often have returned to her village, he would not so far humiliate himself. Some inquiries, however, he condescended to make by a confidential person sent for the purpose, merely with the view of ascertaining if Lucy were alive or dead,—for death alone, he argued, could explain her supposed conduct. About the very time his emissary arrived in the village, she had become the envied wife of the rich Master Turner ; and this intelligence necessarily confirmed his former angry resolutions.

The Captain and Lucy yet spoke, when Charles's voice sounded shrill and joyfully from the bed ; “ Yes, Billy, yes !—’tis Charley ! Billy !—mother’s darling !” They stepped round to the bedside. He had crept under the

blankets, and clasped the child close to his bosom ; and now, indeed, the efforts of the surgeons, although despaired of by themselves, began to yield a good result.

“ He would not die, to let you say I killed him, mother,” said Charles, laughing through his tears.

“ The child lives, by Heavens !” cried the captain.

That day Captain Stone was married to the woman of his early choice ; and having despatched before evening the trifling business which first called him to shore, he conveyed his wife to his ship, together with her two sons, and pursued his voyage.

TWICE LOST, BUT SAVED.

TWICE LOST, BUT SAVED.

PERHAPS there is no country so little susceptible, generally speaking, of public sensation as England; events which agitate the peasant, nay, the peasant's wife, at the other side of the straits of Dover, would scarce reach John Bull in his village chimney-nook,—certainly would not disturb the serenity of his countenance if they did. And yet there is one species of occurrence which excites, and pervades English people, through every grade of society, more than it could, or at least more than it does, any other civilised nation. A murder—a downright,

in earnest murder—broad-featured, well-marked, unequivocal, refined—arouses into unusual vivacity all England, from the banks of the Tweed to the Land's End. Its fame spreads, from cities and towns into the recesses of the small mountain hamlet. Men, women, girls, and children, talk and think of nothing else. The newspapers teem with nothing else, excepting only and always the unheeded advertisements of new books. Literary talent of really a high order is vented in descriptions, speculations, deductions, and sentimental discussions on the subject. Artists hurry down to the rural scene of the atrocity to make money by making drawings of it, as well as of all the innocent scenery and accompaniments within view. Thousands of people, who cannot wait for their second-hand information, hurry after them, or anticipate them, to see with their own eyes ; or to hear with their own ears, the whispered anecdotes of the half-petrified carter, who, in the gray dawn of the drizzling morning, found

the stained bread-knife, or the discharged pocket-pistol, (the first dreadful intimators of the deed,) in the lonesome bridle-road, or by the side of the stagnant pool; or they pay round sums to have to say that they sat down in the little back-parlour, or scrambled through the brake where the murderer so lately sat or passed. A bit of the chair upon which he reposed while contemplating his crime, as he glanced into his victim's face, or a branch of the briars among which they struggled together, is eagerly purchased, and reverently and tenderly preserved, like a saint's relic or a true-love token. Is all this to be called honest, national abhorrence? What would Rochefoucault call it? — particularly after detecting in the cabinet of the collector of curiosities the last possible mementos of the sentenced and executed hero, in the shape, perhaps, (lavishly bribed from the law's humblest officer,) of an inch of twisted hemp, the corner of a flaming red cravat, or a gentle lock of redder hair.

So thoroughly had the tidings of such an event as is alluded to penetrated the nooks and corners of the land at the commencement of this little tale, that nought else was discussed around the fire-side of the humblest and most isolated country cottage; and scarce aught else upon the truant and noisy forms of the lowliest village-school. While manhood and old age rehearsed the tale with the profoundest interest, boyhood and childhood commented upon it, in whispers which bespoke a little interest deepened by awe and fear. The murder had, indeed, been of a fearful character. But it must be remarked that weeks had now passed over since its occurrence; that its wretched perpetrator had undergone the earthly expiation of his tremendous crime; and that, notwithstanding, it had not yet begun to relax its influence upon the general mind of the country. And this part requires to be explained.

Justice had gained her victim with difficulty. Circumstantial evidence was slight and loose

against him, and although he had been apprehended upon strong suspicions, it seemed that, after repeated examinations before the magistrates, he must have been discharged from prison. Upon the eve of his contemplated day of enfranchisement, a woman visited him in his cell. A person was so posted as to listen to their conversation. She had been suspected of carrying in spirits to the prisoner, but the irregularity was overlooked by the jailor in hopes of the results it might produce. The miserable beings caroused together, first speaking in cautious whispers, but, gradually, high enough to be imperfectly overheard by the eavesdropper. It appeared that although married, they had only recently met with each other, previous to which event the female had been a poor outcast, glad to avail herself of any protection. The listener thought he then could recognize allusions to the murder, but that the man stopped them, his husky voice sinking into a low and ominous tone. The topic changed.

The woman slightly upbraided her companion with having deceived her. She said it was whispered that he had a wife living. His answer came abruptly and savagely. She repeated her charge in an angry voice; they quarrelled; she reeled and shrieked under his blows; and during her fit of indignation, he who listened caught, though still imperfectly, enough to authorise the jailor in making more objections to her departure than he had done to her admission. In fact, she was speedily removed to a separate cell, and carefully secured under lock and key and bolt.

The object now was to induce a disclosure of all she knew. Magistrates, officers of justice, ministers of religion, visited her alternately, or together. At first it became surmised that she was an actual accomplice. Her gradual confessions, however, if they could be believed, combated this opinion; and finally, as if a heart, once good and never irremediably depraved, had been touched in her bosom by a

horror of the insinuated accusation, she fell upon her knees, and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, called Heaven to witness that, so far from having participated in the hellish crime, she had often, though vainly, interfered to prevent it during the unhappy moments that the murdered man remained alive in her presence.

This was enough, or nearly so, for executing justice upon her wretched associate. The details were elicited at subsequent intervals; repeated by her before a judge and jury; the murderer perished, as a deliberate spiller of blood should perish; and the doors of her prison-house opened, and she passed out into the world—free.

Free—but it was not freedom to her. Hatred, abhorrence, avoidance, curses, execrations, met her at every step, and left no path open for her to choose among her fellow-creatures. All hearts were shut against her as close, ay, closer than the iron door of her cell had been. Public opinion,

particularly in such cases, is rapidly and tyrannically made up. In the interval between her confession and the trial of the greater criminal, the notion first adopted by her visitors in the jail, that she had been a real accomplice in the cruel and abominable murder, seized upon the minds of the community at large. Nay, immediately before the day of trial, every one bandied about the belief that she was the sole homicide, and that she had accused her former companion only in order to save herself. Whether or no these rumours reached that individual in his solitary dungeon cannot be said, but he acted so as to give them a seemingly unquestionable confirmation. After the verdict of the jury had been returned, and again upon the trembling verge of eternity, he declared his own innocence and her guilt. The decent crowd, male and female, grey-beards and piping children, fully credited his assertions, and gratified him with three horrid growls upon the name of Martha Hall—for so was the wretched woman called—

before his ears grew dull for ever to the sounds of this world. The only person who, at that moment, seemed to doubt his sincerity was the clergyman who attended him ; for the culprit's heart had continued hard and obstinate to the very last, against every exhortation to die in peace with God and with his kind.

But the miserable Martha Hall could gain little from the single doubt of the good priest. It was the crowd, the arbitrary, the inhuman crowd she had to face, and, one and all, they rose up against her. Unnerved and ill after her release from jail, she had sought a squalid lodging in the suburbs of the town in which her nominal husband suffered death. Half an hour subsequent to his mortal exit, the howl of the people came towards her door ; her old landlady thrust her out to them, and she fled through their recoiling masses, stunned with curses, with yells, with hissings and hootings, with blows of offal and of hands. The constables could scarce save her life. Half-clad, faint,

weeping, screaming, tottering, they finally succeeded, however, in escorting her beyond the bounds of the town, and then left her panting on the road-side, her back leaning against the fence, and her feet resting in the putrid water at its bottom. Did she find peace here? did any good Samaritan pass that way? No; but some who had seen her in the neighbouring streets did, and taking the other side of the road, they refrained from heaping more cruelty, more dirt and revilings upon her head, only until they could summon to their aid in the task, the fellow-creatures in whose parish she had now dared to set the sole of her foot. And soon the fresh crowd gathered round her; and, amid renewed yellings and blows, she was again hunted, like a mad dog, into another parish, the local officers still scarce able to save her from perishing under the hands of an indignant christian community, most of whom went, each sabbath-day, to one place of worship or another,

and listened to the interpretation of the doctrine of christian charity.

And so, from place to place, wherever she sought a refuge, or a breathing-spot, Martha Hall was pursued. Her name and the curse upon her ran like wildfire before her; so that she was dreaded, and expected, and prepared for, ere she made her appearance in a near town, or village, or hamlet, or parish, and received and welcomed accordingly. Reports of the outrages committed upon her regularly found their way into the newspapers, and thus the more remote haunts of man became acquainted with her "whereabouts;" and people living a hundred miles from the latest scene of her disgrace were able to trace her wretched wanderings, and calculate the likelihood of her shaping her course towards them.

And these were the circumstances which kept up in every mind, long after such a public fever generally abates, the interest of the late

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murder. At each new account of the expulsion of Martha Hall beyond the new bounds within which she vainly hoped to find an asylum, all the circumstances of the event that led to her persecution became discussed over again, with a vivacity which lost little by the repetition. And, as has been said, the commotion and the dread of her was general throughout the kingdom. But it will readily be concluded that the districts nearest in turn to the fugitive outcast experienced the greatest panic and abhorrence.

We must now visit a remote and thinly-inhabited parish in the west of England, of which almost all the inhabitants, at least of the middle and the lower orders, had passed an anxious and idle morning, under the apprehension that their neighbours would send the vagrant within the pale of their jurisdiction. A better illustration of the state of the people's minds can scarce be given, than to notice the fact, that, in expectation of Martha Hall's public entry,

mothers, although they flocked towards the public road themselves, left behind them, under lock and key, such of their children as were young enough to be so controlled.

In one only humble house of the parish was the topic of general interest treated as it ought to have been. This was the dwelling of Laurence Hutchins, a man advanced in years, a widower, and, compared with older sojourners or with natives, a stranger. He had come from a distant county, with his wife, a little girl, and an infant son, only some seven or eight years before. Shortly afterwards his wife died, people said of a broken heart, the seeds of which malady she had brought with her to her new residence; and if Laurence Hutchins did not follow her to the grave, it was not that he too seemed not to share the hidden grief of his companion, but that his frame proved stronger than hers, or his mind more resisting, or, perhaps, that Providence had given him the nerve to endure life for the

sake of his two orphans. The deepest sorrow, indeed, was fixed on his hard-featured, though not displeasing face; and all his actions, and his whole manner, agreed with its expression. He worked laboriously, as a common day-labourer, whenever he could get employment: in his disengaged hours, he dug, or raked, or weeded, or planted, or transplanted in the little garden attached to his solitary cottage; but he made few acquaintances, and no companions: to those who knew most of him, little as that was, he spoke seldom, and never mirthfully: he had no person, male or female, to assist him in the many cares claimed at his hands by his two helpless children: if a visitor dropped in, although Laurence did not demean himself uncouthly, there was no welcome such as might induce a second call: and, to sum up the opinion entertained of him by his surrounding friends, his poor cottage was termed "the sad house," and its master "sad Laurence."

And yet it was in this "sad house" that the

expected arrival of Martha Hall within the parish bounds created no indecent commotion. From the time of the first report of the murder, down to the present morning, little Mima, or Jemima Hutchins, now a growing girl of about twelve, observed that her father never bestowed a word on the subject. He had listened, indeed, to the account of it given to the lonely family by a gossiping neighbour; but, when the tale was ended, Laurence only took his hat and spade, and strode heavily into his garden. Mima, however, could not remain ignorant of the tidings which reached her secluded district day after day. If no other person acted as her informant, little brother Dick ran in to her, during her discharge of such household duties as she was now able to undertake, with the free translations of the newspaper, and other anecdotes, supplied to him, by urchins like himself, on the roadside, or at "the steps," by the brook—a favourite rendezvous of the junior truants of the parish, as it was also the place

where the girls of the adjacent cottages went to fill their pitchers for domestic uses.

Nor could Mima help feeling a portion of the excitement created in all around her by the exaggerated stories of the innocence of the executed man, the guilt of Martha Hall, and her flight from parish to parish, from town to town. Although the practical virtues and benevolence taught her by her father, always in act and deed, and sometimes in sound doctrine, hindered the child from fully sharing the thirst of persecution towards the fugitive, so ostentatiously encouraged in themselves and others by the good people who surrounded her, still she imbibed a strong aversion for the object of all hate and all loathing, and felt a surpassing terror of coming in contact with her. These sentiments gained strength in her breast, from the necessity of keeping them to herself, and brooding over the chimeras they engendered; for, though she could not tell precisely why, Mima would not renew the

topic with her father, and she had no one else to claim confidence of, except her little brother of seven years, and he was nobody.

The family of "the sad house" sat down to their frugal breakfast. One after another, idlers dropt in to report the news of Martha Hall's approach from the neighbouring parish. Still Laurence Hutchins took no notice. Mima, however, listened eagerly and breathlessly. An additional piece of information did not increase her happiness. The last overzealous friend who came to unburden himself of his babbling at Laurence Hutchins's hearth, strongly advised the melancholy man to keep his children within doors, and to stand at his threshold with a bludgeon in his hand, in order to obstruct the probable entry of the vagrant; inasmuch as the brook which ran by the falling ground at the back of his cottage was the boundary of the parish in that direction, and most likely Martha Hall would be driven in amongst them all at that point, or near it;

and then she would make for "the steps," and, up them, straight for his house, and so ———.

Laurence Hutchins again interrupted his obliging orator by putting on his hat and leaving the cottage, his little boy's hand in his, to cut rushes in a neighbouring marsh, for the purpose of making saleable mats of them.

The gossip sat a moment, much offended, opposite to Mima; then, starting at some ominous sound which, he said, reached him from a distance, also arose and left her alone.

Mima sat listening in great fear, more than once inclined to bolt the door and secure herself; but, hearing nothing to suggest immediate danger, and also recollecting that she ought not to barricade her father's house without his permission or advice, she continued fixed upon her stool. Presently she bethought herself of her forenoon duties, and, at a recurrence of the thought of the first and most necessary, poor Mima turned pale: it was to go down the bushy declivity at the back of the cottage,

and fill a pitcher of water from the brook at the steps, wherewith to prepare her father's dinner: the very brook which, in that quarter, ran between her parish and the parish whence the execrated Martha Hall was to be expected; the very steps up which, in the opinion of their anxious visitor, she would most probably escape into new bounds.

At the first view the child deemed it to be impossible that she could run such a risk: but her father must not be left without his dinner at the usual hour: her good father, who, when she was a little girl, took care to have hers ready every day. Besides, would he deem her reasons for the omission of her duty sufficient? From a recollection of his habits of thinking and feeling, she believed not. And finally, after some time had worn away, she knelt down, as she had been taught to do from her infancy, and praying to God to be saved from harm, Mima lifted up her pitcher and took her way to the brook.

There were two distinct descents to "the steps," from the back of the house. At the bottom of the first ran a broad pathway, leading to the marshes whither her father had gone with little Dick to cut rushes. This pathway she gained, stepping firmly, if not courageously, and was mounting over the stile which would usher her upon the first of the rude steps leading down the second descent to the water, when a distant uproar really reached her. She hesitated and stopped. The sounds grew louder. She was turning to race home again. Her father and her little brother appeared coming back from the marsh, having finished their work sooner than she had expected. As they must pass her, she waited for them. Laurence Hutchins expressed some surprise to find her loitering at the stile. She wept. He looked earnestly into her face, and took her trembling hand as he added—"But I see; you durst not go down to fill your pitcher, Mima, for fear of Martha Hall?"

Fresh tears were shed by Mima, and she could give no other answer. Her father patted her on the head, and continued:—"Trip down to the brook, my maid, however; do your duty, and fear no one: besides, why should you fear this poor woman?"

"I hate her more than I fear her, father!" replied Mima, the sudden liveliness of her manner emulating what she had seen among her christian neighbours.

"Hate her, Mima, do you?" pursued Laurence. "And who gave you the leave to hate *her*, or any living creature? Not Him who commands us to love all."

"All, father? even the guilty and the bad?"

"All, Mima—even the guilty and the bad; even them we are to love, though we hate the bad that is in them. But who says that Martha Hall is *so* bad? A judge and jury have believed her innocent of the great crime, at least, laid by less wise people at her door. Go down, my little maid, go down the steps and fill your

pitcher ; and go with courage. I will not even stay here to give you false heart. You will find me and little Dick in the house."

He fondled and kissed her as he spoke, a rather unusual manifestation of his love, though he was practically a very affectionate parent. This, and the reliance placed on her strength of mind, suddenly encouraged Mima ; and dashing the tears from her eyes, she trotted down instantly to the brook's edge ; and while Laurence Hutchins and his almost infant son turned away from the stile to pursue the easy path to their house, each carrying his bundle of rushes, she seated herself on the steps, laid her pitcher at her side, crossed her hands on her lap, and unconsciously indulged for an instant the pleasing sensations which had so suddenly taken possession of her breast.

The clamour she had heard at the stile above, although unheeded during her conversation with her father, here came loudly on her ear. From the opposite side of the brook the

ground swelled, though not so suddenly as at her own side, and ran for about a quarter of a mile, until it met a high road. It was a succession of stubble fields. From the high road, at its far edge, Mima heard the uproar. Her eyes eagerly turned in that direction. She was left but a short time in doubt. A crowd broke over the fence of the road into the most remote field, shouting, yelling, groaning, and hissing, and came in almost a straight line towards her. She started up—but a thought of her father kept her stationary. The rabble rout drew nearer; some running on before Martha Hall, others at her side, others pressing upon her from behind; and all—men, women, boys, and young girls—all similarly engaged, pelting her with clods and mud, spitting in her face, cursing her, and hooting her. The thrice unhappy woman was just protected, and no more, from their utmost fury, by two overseers, each of whom held one of her arms as they hurried her along: and by a beadle, who exerted himself to keep

off the virtuous viragoes, and the manful husbands and fathers at her back. Exhaustion, terror, almost madness, stamped her ghastly features, her rolling eyes, and her parched and dust-clotted lips; blood stained her forehead, her long black hair streamed around her; her clothes were half torn off; her feet were bare, weather-cracked, and swollen; her step altogether uncertain: indeed, but for the support and tugging of the stout overseers, she must have fallen prostrate among the sharp stubbles. And such was the appearance of Martha Hall in her present plight; and yet more than half of Mima's dislike, remaining after her father's words, was conquered by that appearance. The child, shaping a phantom to suit her prejudices, had fancied the outcast into a personification of something monstrous, ugly, and horrible; now she beheld a woman not more than four or five-and-twenty, handsome featured, well formed, and looking no more like a murderess—and a double murderess and traitress, too—than any

other comely female she had before seen. Mima only felt that she looked scared almost to death, faint, and very wretched; although upon this feeling followed another—that she was barbarously treated.

They brought her to the edge of the brook, a few paces below the steps, on the opposite side. Until now, Mima had thought that she spoke not a word. At this close view, however, it was evident that her lips often moved in an effort to shape words, although her voice was only a hoarse, struggling whisper. Seemingly, she craved mercy—humbly, most humbly. A pause took place. The abhorred vagrant was to be forced across the shallow water: but how? Her bitterest haters did not appear inclined to wet their shoes, even to satisfy their magnanimity. “In with her! in with her alone!” arose the cry—in with her! and we shall soon pelt her over to our neighbours?” and they gathered close and clutched her. The overseers resisted a little, as in duty bound. The wretch herself,

with clasped hands, blood-shot eyes, bending knees, and cringing body, mutely implored: the next instant, screeching wildly, she was splashing in the water; and the next, stimulated as well by a dread of a shocking death, as by a shower of clods, sods, and stones, she had, with a desperate effort, scrambled across the brook, crawled up its easy bank, and disappeared among the trees and bushes which, at that point, thickly clothed the base of the ascent thence arising towards Laurence Hutchins's house. Shortly afterwards, with a parting yell, her persecutors hurried back to the road from which they had come; the overseers and the beadle slowly followed, and little Mima was left alone on the steps.

Terrified, shocked, and now full of pity rather than of hate, the child dipped her pitcher in the brook, and hastened to her home. Half way up the steps, groans and hard breathing reached her from a clump of bushes to one side. She leaned, not without awe and some fear still.

over the spot. Stretched upon her back, some distance beneath her, she saw Martha Hall. The woman was staring vaguely straight upward—her eyes and those of the child met—she started through her whole frame—her glance became more intelligent—she half arose on her knees, grasped her hands together; and now, in the deep silence, Minna could distinctly hear her piercing whisper.

“Mercy! mercy and pity, young girl! Save me from them, over again! save me this time, only this time! Let me have a day—an hour—to breathe! *Here*—I ask no more than to lie *here*, and of you no more than not to tell them where to find me! O my maid! my maid! take compassion on me! You are young and innocent, and of *you* I beg some pity!”

“If I am innocent,” replied Minna, weeping, “are you as bad as they say?”

“No!” answered the suppliant, her vehement whisper forcing itself into a wheezing scream—“no! of blood I am free—I am, I am!

and not for what they lay to my charge do I deserve this ! though I *do* deserve it for great wickedness—for early disobeying and shaming a good father and mother—for sending them upon the world, wanderers, till they have gone I know not where—gone where I cannot find them—where I cannot find them, to lay my head at their blessed feet, and die ! But, hush ! does not some one come ? Oh ! will you, will you promise not to betray me ?”

“ No one comes—wait a moment,” answered Mima ; and she hurried home, and told her father every word the woman had said. At the last words he seemed suddenly and greatly aroused, looked hard into Mima’s face, and said, in a very low voice, “ Go back to her, child, and ask her, as she hopes for the mercy of God or men, to tell you her real name and her birth-place : my mind misgives me that the name she bears is not her true one.”

Mima, though wondering at the nature of her commission, did as she was commanded ;

and, having got the woman's answers, returned to her father and said—

“As she hopes for mercy from God or from men, she sends you word that her real name is Mary Ware, and her birthplace a village in Devon.”

“Ay, Mima?” questioned the old man, shuddering, while his head drooped, and his eyes fell glaringly on the floor. “Come here, then, my maid; come here.” The child went over to him: he took her hand, strove to continue speaking, closed his eyes, and fainted.

His child's cries called back his senses. Summoning up, with a great effort, self-command and presence of mind, his first endeavours were to calm her. When he saw her assured, Laurence Hutchins asked, “Is there not a cup of elder wine, and a mouthful of meat, since supper, last night, Mima?”

Mima, rapidly answering, “Yes,” went to make hot the elder wine—often the poor English cottager's greatest luxury: and when she

had done, she brought it, with a plate of cold meat and bread, to her father.

“Not for me, my little maid, not for me,” he resumed: “take it to—*her*”—speaking in a constrained manner, and pointing through the back door; “and tell her she is safe for us: but talk no more with her till you have come back to me.”

Mima returned from her errand, and found her father seated in the same spot, weeping. At her appearance, he strove to hide his tears, beckoning her to him with an extended hand and arm. A second time she came to his side. He put the arm round her neck, made her stand between his knees, and continued:

“The time has come, Mima. After believing that the offender had suffered for crime committed, I had hoped, mostly for your sake, my maid, that it would never come. But it has; and, because it has, listen to what I have prayed, morning and night, you should die without hearing from a living tongue. Listen

to our shame, Mima. Eight years ago, she left her precious mother and myself; left us, after growing up, under our love and care, and in the love and fear of God, into a beautiful creature, the light of our eyes, the pride of our hearts, and the boast of our vain lips. Neither had her mind been neglected; for I was then in what is called a respectable way of life, and had received some education myself, and was therefore doubly able to attend to hers. But she left us, Mima, after being a child to us—and *such* a child!—for seventeen years. I own that her first temptation was not small. The man—the robber—was of rank in the world, young, handsome, and he promised her marriage—a secret marriage—ay, and flattered even her old love for her father and mother by swearing to enable her to raise them above a chance of want all the days of their life.

“So much I have since learned; though it was not from her I learned it—no, nor anything else; for she would hold no intercourse with

me after her elopement. I pursued her. The man's servants turned me from his door. I wrote to her: she did not answer my letters. Then came the news of his abandoning her; and then a terrible rumour of——no matter what. I believed in it for some time, because in no other way could I account for her still avoiding us. Well, my maid, you were four years old then; and when your mother and I looked at you, we said to each other, ‘This child is now our care: let us save her from the curse of her sister's shame in after life:’ and, with that, we left our native place, ruined in fortune on account of the numb that came over me, and changing our names we settled here. But your mother, Mima, could not bear up against it. She died, you know; and I was left alone to meet this day.”

“Then, father,” said Mima, pale and trembling, “this woman, Martha Hall—that is, Mary Ware, I mean—”

“She is your sister, my maid. You want to

ask why I never mentioned her name before? why, in fact, I never told you you had a sister?"

"No, father, no; I understand why now: you made me understand it when you began to speak. Are you able to come with me to her yet, father, and help her up to the house?"

He groaned wretchedly, and then said—"I will at least hear her denials more at length of what she spoke of to you, my child. But I must go alone; and, before I go—" He walked into his little sleeping nook, leaving the sentence unfinished. But Mima knew what he meant, and as she went on her knees was sure that she joined him in prayer. Providence had been preparing some alleviation of misery for both.

The child was disturbed in her innocent devotions by the sound of men's voices at the back of the house. Alarmed for her unfortunate sister, she sprang to her feet: her father, also startled, came out of his chamber. The fears of both were not allayed by meeting, on

the threshold of the back door, the overseers and the beadle of the next parish, preceded by an elderly person in black, who seemed to be a clergyman. Nor did the question of one of the overseers appear to bode good.

“Have you seen the woman, Martha Hall, pass this way?”

Father and child could not conceal their embarrassment.

“Yes, you have seen her, thank God! for the poor creature’s sake,” said the clergyman. “Fear nothing, my good people, on account of your christian act towards her. She has undergone much, oh! much, much wrongfully; but her trials are over, she is proved innocent, and the proof having reached my hands, it became most peculiarly my duty to hasten after her upon her wretched pilgrimage, and save her from future persecution. Tell me, good man, is she not under your protection? in your house? and how has she borne her misfortunes? life not in danger? Where is she? let

me see her. Oh, thank God that she is found !”

“ Thank God !” repeated the father, and he staggered backward against the wall. Mima flew out of the cottage—he knew where.

“ You seem greatly overcome by your first fears for her and yourself, master,” continued the clergyman ; “ but compose yourself, for I assure you again that there is nothing to apprehend.”

“ And so she *is* quite, quite innocent of it, sir !” demanded old Ware, grasping the hand which the good priest had kindly laid on his arm.

“ You shall hear. You know the whole previous story, of course. You know that the declarations of the real culprit formed the chief grounds for the popular fury against the poor, unhappy, and greatly wronged woman.”

“ Poor, unhappy, and greatly wronged woman !” echoed Ware, and then added, “ I do know, sir.”

The clergyman went on.

“ It was I who attended the miserable man in his last moments. I could not credit his assertions for reasons of my own. A subsequent event proved my judgment correct. The clothes of such a wretch as he was, became, after death, the property of the almost as depraved being who executes the law’s sentence. Weeks after the nominal husband of Martha Hall had expiated his hideous crime, a half-written letter, found in a secret pocket of his coat, was brought to me. It would seem that the murderer had been interrupted, almost in the act of writing it, by the officers who arrested him, and that afterwards it escaped his recollection : but we have proved it to be in his hand. It is addressed to a brother-profligate in London, and, although the language is disguised, not only admits his commission of the crime for which he has suffered, but alludes, petulantly and savagely, to the vain interruptions he had received, during his perpetration of it, from Mar-

tha Hall. And now you know all, and will hesitate no longer in introducing me to the poor woman, that I may carry her, if she is able to be moved, to some asylum where she can be comforted, cherished, and saved in body and in soul."

"This is her asylum while she or I live, sir," answered Ware; "and here, and here alone, she shall be comforted, cherished, and, if we can, saved in body and in soul."

"Your intentions do you honour, my good friend; but, let me ask you, do your circumstances allow you to offer her a home?"

Ware started, looked towards the overseers and the beadle, who stood at some distance, put his lips to the clergyman's ear, and replied—"Let me whisper you, sir. This *is* her home; and home will be home to her, be it never so homely."

"Walk out with me," resumed the clergyman, much moved. "What am I to under-

stand?" he continued, when they stood alone in the open air: "is she anything to you?"

"She is my child, sir," answered Ware, as he covered his face with his hands.

A short explanation followed, and they went together in search of Mary Ware. Mima met them at the stile leading down to the brook. She was crying heartily, and yet smiling. Her sister had heard all she could tell. "And she expects you, father," continued Mima: "and oh! pray make haste; for it troubles her so that I fear, I fear!"—

They quickened their pace, Mima running on before them, and disappearing, at the bottom of the steps, into the thicket. When they gained a sight of Mary Ware, her head drooped over her little sister's shoulders, who knelt beside her, her arms hung helplessly, and her eyes were closed. Her father embraced her before she seemed aware of his presence. At last she opened her eyes and fixed them on his:

then a great change took place in her features, and she could no longer support herself on her knees. Evidently, however, she strove to speak, and after much dreadful struggling whispered, "What word, father? what last word from you?"

"God forgive and bless my poor child as I do," answered Ware. Again she made a feeble and useless effort to utter seemingly a joyous and comforting ejaculation. "Come here, sir," resumed the father, addressing the clergyman, who stood apart. "She wants both our help now." The benevolent man understood him, knelt by his side, and prayed aloud. Ware repeated his words, as so did little Mima, though weeping convulsively. Mary seemed for many minutes aware of the sounds they uttered, and her voiceless lips moved too, as if her mind prayed. The father stopped suddenly as her head lay heavier on his shoulder, after a long sigh had escaped her. "She is dead, sir," he said, in an even, solemn tone.

“ But saved,” replied the clergyman. ”

“ We hope it, sir ; and I am not impatient under this ending of all her faults and sufferings. It pleases me better to hold her dead in my arms to-day, than it could have done to have held her alive in them yesterday.”

“ Let me be your friend,” sobbed the clergyman, grasping his hand.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

AZINEB, the son of Omar, succeeded to his father's crown, at an early age ; and all his subjects, the old and wise men, as well as the unlettered and the humble, instead of withholding their confidence from his youth, blessed Alla and the Prophet for the prospect of a good and happy reign. For, although nineteen years had scarce rolled over the head of Azineb, he was known to be matured in wisdom and virtue. From his boyhood he had devoted himself to books, and the conversation of the learned and the accomplished ; his days and nights of study

being relieved only by practising such manly and warlike feats and sports as would at once prepare him for probable future hardships in battle, and exercise the physical strength and skill with which God had blessed him, and which, therefore, were not to be permitted to remain uncultivated. So that, while few or none of his subjects, of his own years, rivalled Azineb in a knowledge of the grave literature of his country; in science, in poetry, and, above all, in his Koran; and while the wisest, the oldest, and the most religious men of his court, wondered at the sedateness and vigour of his discourse; he was also unsurpassed, if not unequalled, in graceful feats of horsemanship, in the use of the scimitar, and in courage and adroitness in hunting the lion, the leopard, and the tiger. His own hand had given the death-blow to many of these ferocious animals; indeed, he bore home more of their skins than did any other adventurer of the chase; and yet, so tempered with skill and prudence was his in-

trepidity, that from tusk or talon he had never received a wound.

The learned fathers of his mind were justly proud of their scholar, and boasted of his acquirements and talents, more than they did of their own:—it was whispered, however, by some satirist of the court, that they thus took the best way of ensuring royal tributes of admiration and gratitude to themselves. Another of Azineb's instructors might also be allowed to feel honoured in his pupil; namely, Mustapha, a man high in military command, and his master, ever since childhood, (until the princely boy first equalled, and then eclipsed his own skill,) in warlike exercises and in the hunting-field. But whatever were Mustapha's inward feelings on this subject, he never boasted of his pupil, as did the more superior and revered men who had aided in forming the mental and moral excellence of the (so called) Royal Wonder. Had any one raised a question of Azineb's manly prowess,

he would have gainsayed the slander, at risk of his life; but he seemed too sure of the fact, to insist upon it; and of its general acceptance, to talk about it. Making it a theme of self-praise, either in vanity, or that his master might hear his speeches, and show a pleased consciousness of them, never entered into his mind. The sole privilege which Mustapha appeared to think he had acquired by his successful instructions of Azineb, was that of loving him the more: and in this love of the subject for the prince, was essentially included the zeal of serving him faithfully. And Azineb, understanding and feeling the claims of Mustapha, not only recognised and admitted his love, and afforded opportunities for its indulgence, but returned it, also, with his heart, and rewarded it with his bounty.

It was amazing, if not irksome, to the philosophical, the poetical, nay, the pious colleagues of Mustapha, that he should succeed so well at court, merely by saying nothing on

the topic which, of all others, seemed calculated, if well kept alive, to ensure him success. None of them got on better, if so well, by the contrary, and, as they argued, more advisable, rule of conduct. Their individual reveries on this point, for they were too wise to communicate, at present, their sentiments to one another, began to create a jealousy of Mustapha. And, upon the occasion of a grand banquet given by Azineb in the palace, in honour of all his former tutors, this jealousy rankled into something akin to hatred, in consequence of a particular mode of designation adopted by the prince towards his old riding-master.

During the feast, the young monarch proposed in succession the healths of his guests. One was his "most revered helper in reading the Koran;" another, "his honoured tutor in astronomy;" a third, his "most useful assistant in languages;" a fourth, his "accomplished play-fellow in the bowers of poetry!" but Mustapha he simply called, "my faithful

servant." And one would have thought that, by complimenting in their own polite style, each of Mustapha's rivals, Azineb had taken the best means of gratifying their laudable pride, and of leaving them nothing to complain of: and, indeed, so he had, until the proposal of his last toast; but that was too much for logic, rhetoric, rhyme, and piety, united: and from that hour, Mustapha had active enemies at court, and they at last began to make common cause against him.

The ethical sage of the cabal, sitting down to consider a plan for disgusting Azineb with his Faithful Servant, soon built up a formidable battery of syllogisms. His first assumption was a simple one, an axiom in fact, or something else, more true, if possible, namely, "Azineb is very young." Then he proceeded to the following effect, though with greater order. "Very young, and blessed with robust health, and a vigorous constitution; consequently, notwithstanding his precocious philosophy, religion, and morality, containing

within him all the springs of strong natural passions. Suppose some of these excited—what then? Mustapha is an austere man; a crabbed man; and somewhat of a rough-spoken man: he deems he loves the prince: would he relish Azineb's backslidings? would he let them pass without reproof? And then, how would the prince take his constant moralizing, either in its matter or manner?—Let us see.”——

The professor consulted his colleagues, and they admired his system, and pledged themselves to each other to carry it into effect. The master of belles lettres began the attempt. He composed beautiful verses in praise of the most lovely and fascinating maiden of the royal city, and sang them, and caused them to be sung repeatedly in the presence of Azineb. From admiring the poetry, the prince unconsciously was led to ask questions about its object, and received answers which heightened his curiosity. In due time, the charming Zobeide supped at the

palace; and after an evening of song, smiles, roses, perfumes, music, wit, and wine, her youthful entertainer proved mortal; and so far were verified the inverted ethics which conjectured this event.

Little was now necessary but to continue an application of excitements, sufficient not only to satisfy the cravings of new-born passions, but also to smother the occasional pangs of remorse; and the conspirators were not idle in their duty. Day by day, step by step, Azineb surrendered himself into the arms of sensual pleasure and licentious enjoyments. To his great comfort—for during his first hours of repentance he had feared the contrary—neither the moralists nor the divines of his council troubled him with their reprehensions. As they had calculated, however, there was one man who did exercise the duty of affection towards his royal master.

Not after the first lapse of Azineb, nor yet after his third or fourth, were the unwelcome

hints of Mustapha addressed, notwithstanding, to his ear. The beloved and princely boy had sinned long, and impulses were on the verge of becoming habits, (hideous change!) before his Faithful Servant uttered a word of expostulation; and then, indirectly, he would say, "The wisest man, in his youth, is made weak. Who therefore wonders? It is so."—Again. "When the young man is wise and virtuous, and has fallen into no snares, the old bless him, though they wonder, and say the snares have not been spread in his path."—Or, at another time, "The stumblings of the good, and the sins of the hardened in evil, are two things. It is so."——

To such gentle admonitions Azineb gave little heed, though he lent them an ear. The temptations to disregard them were too strong for their refraining tenderness. By degrees, the sincere Mustapha grew bolder in the stern task of love: but his idolized prince had become less sensitive of admonition,

and still he produced no effect. He gained his utmost possible point of reproof, beyond which even his feelings dared not to pass; and now Azineb heard him impatiently, because he was still more self-devoted to licentiousness, and therefore still more removed from sympathy with Mustapha's heart. The sole thing he could or would eventually distinguish was the uncouthness of his monitor's manner; and this he called rude, at first, and then bold, and at last audacious; knowing not, or seeing not, that here he was confounding manner and motive, and so misrepresenting true friendship.

The learned and accomplished conspirators could not long remain ignorant of such a change in Azineb's sentiments towards his "faithful servant;" for exactly such a change they had hoped to produce, and were watchful accordingly. And thereupon they sharpened other weapons for Mustapha's overthrow. The poet took an occasion to exhibit, garishly, the old

soldier's lack of accomplishments, by calling upon him for an impromptu, of which all the world knew he did not even comprehend the nature; and Azineb, to whom, at that moment, the power of saying a witty thing in verse was a great talent, (because he could excel in it himself, and because it hit the vein of the hour,) joined in the scoff against his old friend's simple rejection of the challenge. Upon a less elated occasion, he agreed with the astronomer, that any man who was ignorant of at least the rudiments of heavenly science was a disgrace to the cabinet of a civilized court; and it was not long till he listened to an insinuation of Mustapha's orthodoxy, originating with the sage of the Koran, the uncle of the last unrivalled beauty who had been introduced to the royal palace.

In fact, Azineb soon admitted, nay believed, or thought he did, that for many weighty and virtuous reasons he ought to dismiss Mustapha from court, and confine him to a pro-

vincial military command, hundreds of miles distant; and yet a cowardliness of purpose, the common attendant curse of the sensual, or else a lingering recollection at his heart, hindered him from issuing the necessary order. Meantime, he tried to palter with the embarrassment. His queen of the hour would be amused by assuming a part in a tiger or lion hunt; and he desired Mustapha to prepare for taking the field, upon a certain day, with extraordinary pomp and preparation; supposing that his old tutor might thus be diverted from present thoughts into the bias of former enthusiasm.

Upon the morning of the appointed day, the hunting cavalcade left the palace in as much pomp, as Asiatic gorgeousness ever witnessed. The beauty and trappings of the Arabian coursers, the highly-ornamented castles of the elephants, the surpassing splendour of the palanquin which contained Azineb's reigning favourite,—beside which the youthful prince

rode upon a steed of unmatched proportions and fleetness,—the bands of music, the ensigns, all formed a magnificent spectacle.

Intelligence had just been gained that a lion had descended, the night before, upon the herd of a neighbouring noble, and, after having been surprised and scared from his prey, had retreated into an adjacent wood. Those skilled in the knowledge required for a good hunt, decided that he should be tracked, roused, and challenged in his temporary lair, because they concluded that his balked appetite would render him peculiarly disposed to manifest the true spirit of his nature. Mustapha, the conductor of the sport, agreed to these reasons and arrangements, and the cavalcade accordingly got into motion for the wood pointed out by the guides.

It was approached across an almost barren plain, scorched by the sun, and scantily studded here and there with sharp rocks, which afforded root, among their, crevices, to some meagre

shrubs and blades of brown grass. A broad and rapid river divided this plain from the leafy retreat of the lion, and was to be crossed only by a rude bridge, a good distance up its stream from the cavalcade's line of advance. The middle of the wood, deemed to be the beast's couching-place, was, however, straight before the hunters, close by the river's opposite bank; and a flat country, stretching to the right and to the left from its skirts, and a gentle ascent beyond and above it, showed the only ground over which, after having been scared from his lair, he could be pursued. As all stopped on the sterile plain, some distance from the near bank of the turbulent water, Azineb understood, at a glance, that upon this spot he ought to halt his beautiful favourite: for from it she could fully see any possible turn of the chase, excepting the start in the wood, without sharing one of its perils; and he accordingly gave orders to have her palanquin rested, its bearers halt, and a body of horse

form around her, while he turned to cross the bridge, with his attendants, and so approach the wood.

Mustapha had been considering the opposite ground as attentively as his master, and, from his own conclusions, respectfully objected to the proposed arrangement, so far as concerned the safety of the lady. The wood was not thick, he said: it afforded numerous temptations to an angry lion to break through it, regardless of any line of men who might be left to guard its edges; in reasonable anticipation, the beast they were about to rouse would prefer attempting a return to the prey from which he had been scared the previous night, to a retreat into the hungry wilderness he had abandoned upon his late adventure.

Rendered obstinate by his self-opinion, Azineb laughed at this advice. Whispers from some of Mustapha's enemies prompted him to treat it even more despotically. He told Mustapha that he believed it arose rather from

a design to betray the lady into danger, than to save her from possible harm.

“Then Mustapha will watch by the palanquin to share the dangers of his own treachery.”

To this, still prompted by a whisper, Azineb made a cruel and tyrannical retort. “The old hunter fears for himself,” he said.

“If Mustapha has taught the young hunter to fear for himself, it is so,” replied Mustapha, with more spirit than the highest subjects were allowed to use towards an Asiatic prince; and he had not spoken the words when Azineb struck him on the shoulders with the flat of his sabre, and ordered him to quit the hunting-ground and retire down the bank of the river. A great struggle was seen in Mustapha’s features, and his hand involuntarily moved towards his own sabre; but pure love of the royal boy whom he had often helped to his saddle, and pure love alone, subdued all his majestic wrath, and making a low salutation, he rode slowly in the direction in which he had been commanded to go.

He halted, about the same distance from the palanquin, down the stream, as was the bridge from it, towards the water's source. Proud, bitter, and yet tender tears filled his eyes. At first he felt no wish to notice the proceedings of the pompous and gallant train from whom he had been ignobly banished. Their music and their cries aroused his interest, however, and he glanced to the bridge and then to the wood: the greater number were just entering the latter, after having stationed a weak line round its skirts. Farther he could not observe the chances of the hunt: but the continued cries, now of a changed cadence, which broke from the lion's umbrageous lair, told his experienced ear, first, that the animal had been tracked; next, that he had been seen and dared; next, that his anger had been roused into an attack upon his assailants: and the ensuing sound Mustapha heard was the explosive, almost crashing roar of the terrific beast himself, as he sprang out of the wood,

overwhelmed two or three of his scared enemies on its outposts, and plunged into the river exactly opposite the bank where the palanquin rested.

His fiery eyes were scarcely seen glaring in the water, by the horsemen left to guard the lady, ere they fled across the plain like one of its own hurricane-blasts; the equally frightened horses not requiring spur or whip to urge them to utmost speed. Then Mustapha heard piercing shrieks issue from the palanquin, and saw its glittering silk curtains shaken violently in the sun, and white arms tossed in agony through their openings towards the wood. The following instant, Azineb's worshipped one, and all her young slaves, ran, still screaming, along the river's bank, approaching the point where Mustapha had stationed himself. "She is very young and beautiful," muttered Mustapha, "and but for *him* would have been innocent. He loves her too," he continued, as in answer to her startling calls, the young prince just

then issued from the wood, and, casting his eyes abroad over the river, began—after bounding forward a few steps—to return her cry for cry, tear his hair, rend his garments, beat his breast, and exhibit all the actions of utter anguish and despair. For now the lion gained the confronting bank; and as Azineb and all his attendants had left their horses at the bridge, pursuit was useless. “Loves her,” resumed Mustapha, “as the apple of his eye; loves her, even as he hates me. What then?” he took another glance at the terrified girl. From excessive fear or lack of strength, she had been left far behind by her slaves, and the lion, evidently selecting her as an object of vengeance, closed fast upon her—“What then?”—Mustapha made but a moment’s pause when he added, “It will be so. He shall see it—” and suddenly taking off a loose part of his dress, he threw it over his courser’s eyes, to hinder him from seeing the lion, and galloped amain to meet the poor fugitive.

Shouts, in applause of his heroism, arose from the prince and many of the attendants: and Azineb now ran along his own side of the river, towards the bridge, obviously bent upon seconding, if possible, the daring attempt of Mustapha. During his hurry thither, accompanied by his hunters, he lost sight of the appalling scene: when he and they had remounted, and crossed the bridge, Mustapha held his prize before him on the saddle. Again all shouted tremendously, now to overawe the lion, and turn him from his unremitted pursuit. The enraged beast paused an instant; looked back upon them; and then, as if ascertaining that the distance between them and him allowed him scope for his present purpose, uttered a roar of defiance, and renewed his bounds after Mustapha. And that roar gave him fearful odds. Hitherto, Mustapha's steed had not been aware of his proximity, for his eyes were hood-winked: now he *heard* the voice of the king of beasts, and it was enough. Swerving

aside, he shook the piece of drapery from his eyes, and with tottering and failing limbs remained paralysed. Again and again Azineb and his train uttered wild cries, and urged on their own fear-stricken coursers. “It is vain!” shrieked the prince, “Behold!—Yet shout, still! shout!”

The lion had sprung against the side of Mustapha’s horse, and fastened upon a limb of the rider. Mustapha saw him prepare for his last bound, and with one arm holding her up, and another holding her back, endeavoured to place his charge out of immediate danger. It gave him pleasure instead of pain, when he felt the beast’s fang tearing his own flesh. “Come on!” he exclaimed, to the approaching hunters; “I can hold her till ye vex him away from us!” They jumped from their saddles, and ran forward with spears and scimitars. Mustapha felt his strength failing, and his eyes growing heavy, and his frame cringing, in spite of him; for the lion had now fastened his tusks

in his body. But he faintly caught the sound of more feet, and louder cries; and was sensible of being released by the lion: the next moment he recognised the prince's voice, making quick inquiries, and could just utter, "She is untouched to the hair of her head—Mustapha, whom you love no longer, says 'it,'" when he fell from his saddle, dead.

That day won Azineb back to virtue, but it lost him his Faithful Servant.

THE ROMAN MERCHANT.

THE ROMAN MERCHANT.

THE Norman and Welsh Lords of the Pale, in Ireland, determined, in the first instance, upon building themselves in from the natives of the country in which they colonized; that is, at such seasons as they did not deem convenient for voluntary rencontre in the field, or by wile, with their detested neighbours. The rudely-wrought and ungraceful square castles, without adjunct of any kind, which to this day are found in the Pale districts of Ireland, were the results of their earlier attempts to indulge this love of solitude. Soon after, walled towns sprang up in the land, still to keep out all

pure-blooded descendants of Heber and Heremon. But this could not last. The general similarities of human nature began, in the course of time, to attract and approach each other among the two people. Common wants, suggesting common interests, had the usual and inevitable effect of levelling the barriers of exclusiveness on the one hand, and of qualifying hatred on the other; and long before Cromwell's devastating visit to Ireland, neither double-curtained walls, nor lines of circumvallation, nor massive gates, nor yet laws stronger than any of these, were able to keep the Anglo-Normans and the mere Irish from mixing comfortably together.

It may appear, however, that the natives were not all at once received into the bosoms of the towns and cities of the strangers, even when liberality and common sense had begun to legislate in their favour. Most probably, they were only permitted at first to settle *extra muros*, and there erect dwellings of their own.

By degrees, that part of the wall of the Pale-town running between the two communities was thrown down, or suffered to fall into decay; and the quickly-blending races then agreed to let one continued wall enclose and protect both.

In this manner two towns would have become a single town, known to the world by a single name. And such was the case with respect to Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny, and other places of considerable and even of much less note in the west, the south, and the middle of Ireland. Either a relic of the old spirit of making distinctions, or else common parlance, continued, however, to designate separately the two clusters of houses thus massing together, by the names of English-town and Irish-town; or else, while that quarter originally English was distinguished by the geographical name equally applying to both, the streets of Milesian architecture retained their mere Irish title.

And this "distinction without a difference" (no common-place quotation,) exists at the present day; and so we arrive at our story.

The Irish-town of our dear and not uncelebrated native city is now before our eyes, as vividly as when we roamed through it in childhood. One side of its main street reposes in the sunshine of a sunny Saturday. (Why has the word occurred?—rather, why ask that question?—what reader who has been a school-boy will not comprehend the associations that suggest it? A sunny Saturday!—school dismissed at noon—the whole day and evening, ay, and the next day too, lengthening out before our minds in a most luxurious prospect of leisure and enjoyment—and the blessed sun shining! Oh! to this hour, a sunny Saturday wears its own peculiar radiance to our eyes, and gladdens our heart like a very act of happiness!—But we must describe—not be guilty of sentiment.)

We have said that the main street of *our* Irish-town appears to us this moment, as vividly

as when we were children; yet not exactly so. Memory is at best but a camera-obscura, in which, though there be true forms, there are sobered colours and subdued lights; even the sunlight cannot be brought to mind in it as brilliant as in reality it has been. It is promised, however, that our little sketch shall be faithful enough. And so, look once more down the main street. The sunny side shows a straight line of humble houses—some very humble—the most considerable not more than two stories high; they are all old, or oldish, and here and there runs up a gable-front with round stone chimneys, that speaks of absolute antiquity. And they are all the abodes of shopkeepers—not a single gentleman's hall-door, with a heavy brass knocker, is to be seen in the row; and some of these honest men ("comfortable" folk, neither affluent, nor struggling like certain of their contemporaries "in town," who figure, or try to figure, on a larger scale,) are standing at their thresholds, talking across

to their opposite neighbours, or leaning over their closed half-doors doing the same thing; and they happen to be almost all of an age, and that age some fifty years; and you may perceive, in the fashion of their respectable clothes, and in their sleek three-curl wigs, as well, indeed, as in the characters of their faces, a sober attachment to the usages and to the mind of old times, which strikingly distinguishes them from their brethren only a few streets off. The narrow flag-way before their shops is worn from age, rather than from the bustle of the street at any time. Even upon this day, at noon, there is little crushing or pushing by their doors. When one of the respectable householders raises his voice, you can hear him talking, from the steps going up to the cathedral, all the way to the little bridge that connects the street, quite at the other end, with the English-town; the shouts, cries, gabble, laughing, and crying of the urchins who are at play in the middle of the road, make the air ring; and when a horse trots

over the stones, or a cart or car rolls over them, you would think the little old houses were about to tumble down with the noise.

This outline bears date some—no matter how many—years ago. Enough to say that we were schoolboys when we studied (unconsciously indeed) the original. A grand-uncle, then about sixty, told us he remembered the Irish-town just the same when *he* was a boy. It may hence be inferred that the present sketch will stand good for from seventy to eighty years, past and gone, according to the reader's good-natured allowance for our objection to be called middle-aged. And so, seventy or eighty years ago, we are in the main street, seeing nearly the same houses, shop-windows, and shop-doors, and nearly the same kind of shopkeepers standing at them, or leaning cross-armed over them, which have already been described. It is past noon, too, and the summer-sun is uncloudedly shining.

Amid all the quiet and listlessness of the little

street, a remarkable man, leading a small cart, drawn by an ass, entered it by a cross-street, at the country side of the Irish-town, and attracted immediate attention. He wore a costume which, to whatever nation or tribe it belonged, proclaimed him a stranger, not only in that town, but in Ireland. This consisted of a loosely-fashioned great-coat, of a brown colour, reaching nearly to his toes, secured tightly at his throat, and girt round his middle with a leathern belt and buckle; of russet boots, falling in folds to his ancles; and of a head-dress of red linen, or some such cloth, wound round and round his forehead. Having turned the corner of the street, he raised his eyes, which had been previously fixed on the ground, as if to note the situation of a little inn, to which he might have been directed; and then the interest of the shopkeepers of Irish-town increased ten-fold. Those eyes were very large, deep black, sad, mysterious, and yet tranquil; his nose was long, slightly hooked, and prominent; his cheeks and

whole visage swarthy and thought-worn: but what most attracted notice was his short, thick, coal-black beard, which completely hid his chin, and his mouth almost, and, when again he bent his head to his breast, made a black spot even on the surface of his dark-brown robe. Those who looked at him could not call him old, nor even advanced in years, though they hesitated to call him young. His pace was as heavy as his face seemed to be serious. The dust of travel was on his dress, his hair, his whiskers, and slightly on that strange beard. Although he appeared leading the little cart, no one thought of classing him with the vulgar of any country, who perform such humble offices; nay, whether from natural character, or from former rank, he impressed himself as a person of a vague superiority. His cart was well loaded with trunks, boxes, and bales packed in sack-cloth or in matting.

It seemed, that the one glance he gave, after entering the street, assured him of the point to

which he walked ; for, as if content with it, he passed along the middle of the way, looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor, indeed, again lifting up his eyes. If he were conscious of the general attention he attracted, he was also indifferent to it. The little inn was the last house but one to the bridge, at the further end of the street. He gained the open gate-way which led into its stable-yard ; halted his ass ; turned his face towards the opposite houses : fixed his regards on one—a very humble one—of which the closed door and shutters told that it was uninhabited and to be let ; wiped his heated brow with the wide sleeve of his gaberdine ; and then, still taking not the least notice of the many curious eyes bent upon him, again put his hand to his ass's halter, and led it to one of the stables of the inn.

More than one of the shopkeepers of Irish-town, after debating with their neighbours the probable country, rank, profession, and religion of the stranger, passed over to the inn to hold

consultation on the same points with its shrewd and observant landlady. But they only found her as much surprised and as curious as they were themselves. Her new guest, after seeing his little beast well disposed of, had summoned her servants to unload his cart, and caused them to convey its trunks, boxes, and packages into a private room: and then, placing a purse in her hands, retired after his property, ordering a frugal dinner. Since that moment, neither she nor any one in her house had seen him. He kept his door locked, and objected to open it till the hour of dinner. His language was English, broadly marked with a foreign accent and idiom; yet he made himself sufficiently intelligible.

Conjecture continued at a stand for many hours. At last, in the cool of the evening, the good folk of Irish-town saw the same man issue from the inn, dressed like one of themselves, his beard gone, and a decent three-cocked hat on his head, instead of the unchristian-looking

pile of red linen. He crossed the little bridge, and passed "into town." Again his landlady was consulted, and her answers, while they gave more information than before, caused more surprise. At dinner he had asked of her the name and residence of the proprietor of the house which was to be let in the street, and noted down both in his tablets; and after his meal, he a second time went up to his chamber; there cut and shaved off his beard, and changed his dress; when he had done dressing, locked his door on the outside; and finally left her house, as her neighbours had observed, without speaking another word.

This unknown, and perhaps infidel and dangerous wanderer, was about to become, then, a citizen of Irish-town! And what were his means of support, and what were they to be? Would he live in the house as a private gentleman, or would he open the shop and carry on some business? If so, what business? The well-laden cart here occurred to the thoughts

of his future neighbours, and good-hearted and straight-minded people as we wish them to be believed, it will not be wondered at, if fears of rivalry, and (considering that the stranger must have travelled much, and seen many markets) of eclipsing rivalry, too, made some of them look grave.

Perhaps the least liberal among them it was who started the comforting thought, that the proprietor of the uninhabited house might "look two ways," before he consented to accept a tenant of such a questionable description; and different opinions were exchanged on this point, when the stranger re-appeared, crossing the little bridge, followed by the clerk of the attorney, who did legal business for the gentleman whom he had gone to seek. Both gained the house in question, and at its threshold the clerk handed a key to his companion, and wished him a good evening; the new comer unlocked the door and entered the premises, which had now evidently become his.

In a short time he was seen standing at the door, looking up the street. An upholsterer and two of his apprentices came in view, bearing a few of the most necessary articles of household furniture. He beckoned to them: they passed into his house, as if to arrange their goods. He went over to the inn; returned with all its spare hands carrying the baggage of his cart; and before nightfall he had secured his door, and he was alone in his house, the light of a candle shining through the chinks of one of the windows. That was a memorable night in the charitable club-room of Irish-town.

The earliest riser among his neighbours, next morning, saw his shop open, and an ample stock of various articles handsomely disposed in its little bow window, and hanging at its door. These consisted of a strange medley:—woollen and linen; cheap showy jewellery; tobacco and snuff; books and pamphlets; knives, scissors, needles, and such matters;

ready-made shoes and boots ; and flaunting coloured engravings, mostly of divine or sacred subjects. All Irish-town were soon up and stirring ; and, one by one, his competitors walked observantly by his door, or entered his new establishment, in a more blunt and friendly manner, to wish him good morrow and a welcome. They found him sitting behind his counter gravely, and like a man of business “ taking stock,” as they believed, in a large book. He received all his visitors politely, and if he did not return their smiles or good-humoured sayings, he was not backward in replying to their merely complimentary or friendly expressions. All curious enquiries about strange articles in his shop he answered off-hand and satisfactorily. He was asked if he proposed to stay some time among his new neighbours ; and he said—“ I hope so ; I have taken the house for seven years.” Was he not a foreigner ? “ Yes ; a native of Rome.” And his name ? “ Bartolini.”

When public anxiety has been pretty well allayed, the old householders of Irish-town began to compare opinions upon the stranger ; and, notwithstanding previous prepossessions, and even a present certainty that he must prove a formidable rival to more than one long-established shop in the street, no man said or felt that he disliked Bartolini. The sad suavity and unpretending composure of his manners were openly admired ; then, the irresistible conclusion that he was a friendless wanderer, who had suffered much, gained him pity ; and a vague sense of mystery completed the simple interest raised in his favour. As to his name, it was judged to be, indeed, foreign enough ; so much so, that plain Irish tongues could scarce be expected to get round it ; and after various laughing attempts to pronounce it as he had done, his friends, as they said, “ left it to himself to go through the trigonometry of it.” But as he had informed them that he was a native of Rome, this fact and

his present occupation suggested a substitute appellation; and in a few days Bartolini went by the name of "The Roman Merchant," and never afterwards was otherwise designated.

The first morning of his residence in Irish-town he went out among his neighbours to purchase provisions for breakfast and dinner, and he conveyed them home with his own hands. From this it was concluded that he meant to live quite alone, without a servant: and such, indeed, proved to be the case. Neither man nor woman, girl nor boy, resided, during his life, under his truly solitary roof. When the night of that morning drew on, he put up the shutters of his shop-window, secured them, locked his door, and walked forth, as if for exercise. Close by the corner of the street by which he had entered Irish-town, it has been passingly said, were steps which led up to the cathedral. These, a long flight, he was observed to ascend. Then he passed into the churchyard of the venerable and beautiful

edifice spoken of, by a small door, at that time always left open—through it, and out of it by another door at its opposite side—thence into the suburb, and the open country; and returned to his residence in about two hours, and went to rest for the night.

His proceedings on this day are minutely mentioned, because, for years, he scarce ever made any alteration in them, from sunrise to sunset, winter or summer. It is to be particularly observed, that a solitary stroll invariably closed his day of serious and unremitting attention to his shop; add to which, he was often noticed in the cathedral church-yard, for a longer time than seemed necessary to pass through it into the adjacent environs of Irish-town. The only occasions upon which he was not found behind his counter, or met in the street purchasing his breakfast or dinner, or seen upon his evening walk, were when he was absolutely absent, for a while, in Dublin, or elsewhere, laying in a new stock of goods; and

then the Roman Merchant's house remained shut up, till his return with a fresh pile of bales in his little ass's cart.

Soon after his settlement in Irish-town he was more than once invited to a neighbour's house; he declined the civility with his usual blandness, but so firmly and gravely as to put an end to future solicitations. He asked no one to his house; and, in fact, from the night it became his, until he was no longer master of it, it never was entered by any one, except by the customers, or chance visitors of his shop. Proposals were made to him to become a member of the charitable club of the parish. He readily consented, and sent in treble the amount of the specified subscription, but never went to the club-room: and here it may be mentioned, that to the poor of every description, to the wandering beggar at his door, and to distressed objects in the suburbs, he gave liberally and continually. And thus passed his life, for years; holding no communication with his kind,

beyond what a return of mere passing good manners demanded of him ; indeed, never speaking, but when spoken to ; a true hermit, though not of the desert ; a man esteemed and thought well of, though, from year to year, still as much unknown, and as much a mystery to his neighbours, as he had been the first day of his appearance in the street.

It was more than five years after his coming to Irish-town, that, one morning, the Roman Merchant's shop appeared shut at an unusually late hour. People wondered, but supposed he had overslept himself. Hours wore away, and still he was not seen engaged, as usual, in taking down his shutters. They knocked loudly at his door—they thundered at it ; no one stirred within. A little alarmed, they began to surmise that he might have gone to purchase goods before day-break ; for it was winter-time.

To ascertain this point, some went to the cabin of an old woman who took care of his

ass and cart. The ass and cart were under their shed, in her yard; of course, he had not left the town, as had been supposed, as he never did so without them. Consternation as to his fate took possession of the minds of his neighbours.

Noon came; night was drawing on; authorities of the borough caused his house to be forcibly entered: he was not in it; he had not slept in his bed the previous night, for it was undisturbed after having been made up. In his little back parlour an humble supper was found laid out, a bottle of water to one hand, his single chair placed to the table, and the ashes of a turfen fire on the hearth. All his property seemed untouched. Everything was sealed up, the house again secured, and inquiries set on foot in all directions.

Days elapsed, and he was not heard of. The moment and the circumstances, at and under which he had last been seen, now were carefully established. His street neighbours, the night

before his disappearance, had noticed him locking his shop-door, and then going towards "the long steps," upon his accustomed walk. Other individuals had met him in the suburbs afterwards; and one had seen him, at a late hour, roaming through the churchyard. No further could he be accounted for.

At about the end of a week, spent in vain searches and conjectures, some youths of the suburbs were amusing themselves, vaulting over the tomb-stones in the churchyard of the cathedral. It was evening, and the winter's moon began to rise,* shining ghastly over a light sheet of snow, which for some days had covered the ground. They recollected what description of place they were so merry in, and half serious, half in jest, began to banter each

* Since writing the above, we have returned to the scene of the story, and been informed that we made an important omission, as regards the moon, in this part of it; for that, upon the night of the discovery of the body of the Roman Merchant, the planet, strange enough to say, was eclipsed.

other's superstitious misgivings. One, stepping back in mock terror upon his companions, pointed to a far corner, among the stems of two rows of trees, and said that "the sperit of the Roman Marchant was watching them!" All took to flight, in laughing confusion, along the narrow pathway, pushing and jostling each other. Two of them slipped on the snow, and fell to one side among the graves. Their kicking and struggling displaced a loose and carelessly-heaped mound, and the hand and arm of a man, gloved and clothed, started up between them, from the earth. They were the hand and arm of the Roman Merchant. The fact was established when, by the light of lanterns and torches, a crowd, whom their cries had summoned, disinterred the body.

It was fully dressed. Even the poor man's hat was found in his ill-made grave. Closer investigation showed that, along with the key of his shop, his purse had been left in his pocket, his old-fashioned but valuable watch in his fob,

and a mourning ring, of value too, upon his finger. They touched something hard at his breast—it was the handle of a dagger, which they could not at first pull out; the blade traversed the middle of his heart, and its point appeared at his back. The death-blow had been unerring and vehement, and must have killed him before he could have felt it.

Who struck it? That was the question of every tongue, but it remained unanswered. It remains unanswered to the present hour; although the motives of the unknown assassin are darkly imagined and hinted at, whenever this true and unvarnished story is related—and it is still related—in our Irish-town.

The fact of finding his money, watch, and ring, untouched upon his person, removed the first natural suspicion, that the Roman Merchant had been set upon in a thirst of plunder. It then became almost evident that hatred or revenge alone could have borne a murder, of which the object was life—poor life, only: and of the

primitive community whom he had chosen for his last earthly associates, not a heart or mind was found to attribute to its neighbour either of these baleful sentiments against the Roman Merchant. It was known and felt, that although he had not permitted that close and continual intimacy which produces lively feelings of friendship, all had respected him for his demeanour, admired and esteemed him for his charities, and compassionated him, as well for his hermit-life, as for the unexplained misfortunes that must have influenced and shaped it. In what direction, then, was the deadly enemy to be sought? The dagger, when unsheathed from his heart, suggested the first vague elucidation of the mystery. It was at once seen not to be of Irish, or even of English, manufacture; and an old military gentleman of the city, a native, who, after half a life of foreign service, had returned to repose himself among his early friends, unhesitatingly pronounced it to have been made in Spain, by a hand well known to

him, and to others who wrought with such tools. But other evidence, much more important, though still not giving a clue to the identity of the murderer, came to light.

The Roman Merchant's little abode was again entered by competent authority. A more careful and minute search took place in it, after any documents likely to tell who he really was, and who might have been his early friends and connexions in a distant land. In the drawer of his desk was found a sealed packet, with a superscription in a foreign language, which none of the persons then present could translate. An old friar, half hiding in the suburbs, from the enactments of the time, was summoned to their councils; he had been a Salamanca student; he declared the direction on the back of the packet, as well as the writing in the body of it, to be Spanish; and he supplied the following translation: first convincing all, that the writing was dated only some days before, from the residence of the murdered man.

“ To my ruthless and terrible enemy :—

“ You are upon my track again ! After more than five years of quiet, gained by successfully eluding you, you are upon my track again ! After escaping you seven times, in the four quarters of the globe, you have hunted me into this little nook of earth !—I know it—I am sure of it ! Your blood-hound has crossed my path—the subtle devil whom you always sent forth to course after me through deserts and cities, over the most silent places, and into the thickest abodes of men, to mark me, and to fix me for your blow. I have once more seen him ! This very day, though he does not think it—ay, beneath all his consummate disguises of feature and of person, I knew his eye !—this very day, among a crowd of humble peasants in my little shop, and at the very moment that he bargained with me for one of the paltry articles, by the sale of which to them I gain the only bread you have left me—this very day, he and I stood face to face. And now he has gone to tell you

he has found me, and you will surely come, for the last time ! Yes !—my relentless enemy !—my fate !—my destruction cloud !—already you have cast forward your thick shadow upon me !

“ You will come for the last time, I say. Ay, for the last time ; because I will not try to baffle you now. Heretofore I exerted the utmost skill and energy of man to save your soul from future fire (yes—you will die without regretting it !) and my own life from your hand, because I had injured you—because you were *her* blood—because she prayed for *you* to her God in heaven, and forgave *me*—and because, penetrated with a Christian’s sorrow for the past, it was my duty, as well as my heart’s great yearning, to preserve my wretched existence from one who had well forewarned me of his thirst to end it. But now, if after five years’ time for thought, you come—after sending me out, a Cain upon the earth—after taking from me name and rank, fortune, friends, a country, human-kind—after using your power and your sway to disgrace

and beggar me—after trampling me, treading me with your heel, down, down into the dust—if now, once more, you come, let it be for the last time ! I cannot save you—it is doomed ! Or, perhaps, notwithstanding my uncharitable fear of the stoniness of your fierce heart, perhaps my life alone stands between you and the capability of feeling forgiveness and remorse : perhaps, when you can see me stretched stiff at your feet—perhaps then, and then alone, it is decreed that you may relent—that out of the last of my earthly punishment will grow the first of your earthly repentance. Come, then !

“ And yet, have I not already been punished enough ? Oh, very hard has been my life since I injured you ! That you have sent me out to earn my bread in the sweat of my brow—me, nursed on the very knee of luxury and honour—I count as nothing. So much, at least, I can thank you for. Humility, in all things, became my quick and full sense of my sin, and it has been my only solace. But remember !—your

hand has, before now, struck sharp steel into my body; and when you thought I fell to rise no more, whose foot spurned me?

“ Yet why remonstrate with you on this paper?—you can never read the words I write, nor hear them read, till you have shed my blood; and I *do* write them, only to hint to the christian people who shall find my lifeless body, some shadowy explanation of the cause of my coming death. Give me no praise for suppressing your name, and all allusions that might lead to a discovery of it. An angel—and your child—your only, only child, (alas ! alas !—strike home when you strike next !—I merit it !)—she now watches my heart and its workings, and she can feel, if you cannot, why, at more than the hazard of a thousand lives, I refrain from bringing to disgrace a name that I have already tarnished, through my treacherous love of the brightest creature that ever bore *it*, or any other. If they who shall find this paper ever publish it, then you may further reflect that, with a good

omen of your coming, I called not on the arm of justice to shield me from you: but still, thank me not, nor on this account alone indulge remorse. Oh, may the expressions of sincere sorrow and misery I now give vent to, move you to a more lively regret!—and that is a cheering hope. You have never before allowed my voice to reach you; you have stopped short my words with execrations, boisterous as a raging sea; you have interrupted them by outrage on my person; you have sent back my letters unopened; you would have struck down any messenger from me. It is probable, then, that, all along, you have believed me a hard-minded villain, untouched by the result of my own fearful crime. If so, let these, my last protestations, undeceive you. I *am* penitent; humbly, crawlingly penitent. Come!—you will not find me raise a hand, an eye, against *your* hand, *your* eye.

“ I am certain you will be minutely informed of my usual haunts abroad, in this little place,

that so you may surprise me upon a secret spot. Knowing this, it is my resolve to tempt you to a haunt of mine, the most favourable for your purpose. Every night, henceforward, till the last—my last—I will loiter in a lonely corner of the burial-ground of the cathedral, already, or soon to be, well described to you; for thither, I am assured, your spy must have watched me repair, during my accustomed evening walk; and there, among the graves, and perhaps standing upon my own, there, in the dark, I will expect you. Not a cry, not a loud word, shall expose you to detection. Come!—could I avoid you still, I would do it—no matter what words may have here escaped me; but is there the slightest hope that I can? After all that has passed, what corner of the wide earth is able to hide me from *his* glance, and *your* arm? And by walking out in the night, as is my wont, and in the places I am accustomed to—particularly when you know not that *I* know—how shall I be accessory to my own death? True,

I might await you, trebly armed—but against whom? *Her* father!—unutterable horror is in the thought. Ay, come!—and let the last words I shall hear on earth be even her name! Hers—growled forth as you will!”

Thus ended the document. Of that anticipated meeting in the silent churchyard nothing but the result is known. The paper *was* published, and that it produced some of the effects hoped for by the writer is thought by the good and christian; for, some six months afterwards, a large wooden case came, directed to the mayor of the city, from Dublin, where it had been imported; and upon opening it was found a marble urn, with a pedestal, inscribed to “The Roman Merchant.”

ILL GOT, ILL GONE.

ILL GOT, ILL GONE.

“WELL—it’s my turn, now, sure enough, gentleels, to tell my story; and it will be most about how ould Square (Squire) M‘Cass come by the great fort’n, that he couldn’t keep with as strong a hand as he got it—‘Ill got, ill gone,’ ye know, neighbours.” In these words, one of a circle of Irish villagers, assembled round a winter fire, and beguiling the long holiday evening with their favourite amusement of story-telling, began his imposed task. The tale is preserved in his words, or as nearly so as possible.

“Every one that hears me, young and ould, knows who I mean by Square M‘Cass, though

he's dead and gone from among us many a year. Let any gorsoon or little girl that doesn't know—or, at laste, that has heard tell of him, but not of what a great man he was in his time—just step over the trassel of the door of this good friend's house, and look up the slant of the hill, in the moonlight. There is to be seen the remains of a big barrack of a place he built for himself, more than fifty years ago, though its tall gables and chimblies are now tatthered and torn with the weather, and the bat and the scallcrow have more to say to it than Square M'Cass. And, when any one looks at that ould ruin, and is tould, more-be-token, that all the land you can see from the highest window-hole, at every side of it, belonged to him that built it once upon a time, then, certain sure, it will be guessed what a man he was.

“ Well, genteels: 'Tisn't of Square M'Cass, alone, I have to say ‘ Ill got, ill gone;’—the word fits them he got his money from, as well as it fits himself: but ye shall hear what ye

shall hear. I had the story, in bits and scraps, from more than one knowledgeable body, and from time to time; from the poor darling mother o' me—rest her soul in glory!—from cousins and cousin's, childher of some of the people I'm to talk about; and from Jude Murphy, the mistress of the Fighting Cocks, below in the village, and own grand-daughter of the widow Murphy that kept the same house before she was born. And, sure enough, it's into the kitchen of the Fighting Cocks we are to step, the first going off.

“A nate, cosy kitchen it was; kept clane and well-swept; a full barrel always in the corner, and a fireside almost as snug as this one we are sitting at—everything befitting man and horse that came that way, supposing them the first in the land—and barring that the horse had his own good lodging in the warm stable, nigh at hand. And so, Biddy Murphy was sitting forment her man o' the house (they were newly married at that same time) by the plea-

sant fire, of a winter's evening, like this, only earlier, when she hears a sound she was always glad to hear—the noise of horses' feet, stopping at her dour; and, when she hurried to the tras-sel, two decent, well dressed, mannerly men were stepping down from their saddles. She made her curtshee to them, and called Mickle Murphy to put up their horses; and soon she had them settled in the warmest corner, a can of good ould *shibbeen* (home-brewed ale) a-piece, in three hands, and the fresh eggs and the nice bacon screeching in the pan for their supper. And, certain sure, she said in her own mind that she had the luck to have two responsible (respectable) pleasant bodies in her house that night; and, when Mickle came back from the stable, and made one at the fire-side, they all chatted jocosely together, of one thing or another, though nothing particular till after.

“Biddy Murphy's hand was on the frying-pan, to turn out the eggs and bacon on the dish, when she stopt herself, and said, ‘Hushth!

merry Christmas to me! but I hear another man and horse for the Fighting Cocks this blessed night!’ and, sure enough, she whipt to the door, laying the pan on the hearth, and stepped back with a new-comer.

“He was a sogering-man, a throoper, discharged from the wars, as it turned out to be, afther ould Shamus ran from the Boyne, but still in his soger’s clothes, and carrying his long sword at his side, that clanked at every step he made across the flure, in his jack-boots and spurs. His tongue betokened that he came from the Black North, where they don’t spake eithier English, or Irish, or Scotch, but a kind of a mixtrum-gatherum of their own, made up of the three together, that’s not like any dacent christian speech—much good may it do them. The way he had wid him tould of the place he had come from, more-be-token; for he was not sprightly nor pleasant in his looks or his words to Misthress Murphy, nor any one about him, but as serious as a pig getting a sun-dial by

heart, and stand-offish, and apt to find fault with other people's discourse, and quite full of himself; the greater the shame for a young man like him, that night, at Biddy Murphy's hearth, and she doing her best to plase him; for, young enough he was, not above thirty, and a tall broad-shouldered throoper into the bargain.

“When he took his stool at the fire, afther seeing his horse in the stable, the hearty gossip that had been going on there, afore he came to the door, was amost put a stop to. He would not laugh at anything that the woman o' the house, or the man o' the house said, to cheer up the hearts of their customers, or that the two jocose-looking men, who had come in before him, said in return; and so, by degrees, every body grew as down in the mouth as himself: or, if the discourse was taken up now and then, it had no laugh in it, but turned on sarious things. Even the good supper that he had his share of, and the *cruiskeen lawn*,

(full cup, or pitcher,) left at his hand, couldn't make him put on a merry face, so that the people round him might find heart to be jocose again: no, nor as much as make him join in the most in-earnest talk: only from time to time he said a cross word, blaming the victuals, or the *shibeen*, or making out that his companions were discoorsing like fools, or not like christian cratures. By and by, howsomever, he found a little more of his tongue, though it was the bad tongue still.

“‘Ye are not of our parts, genteels?’ says Misthress Murphy, to her other two customers.

“‘No, ma’am,’ says one of them, making answer, ‘this is the first time we ever came into the county Louth.’

“‘And ye come a good way up the country, I’ll go bail,’ says Misthress Murphy, again.

“‘All the way from Kerry, ma’am,’ the man said to her, very civil and hearty.

“‘Musha, ay? that’s a good step, of a

sartainty. And, is the place round about here very sthrange to ye, afther laving your own place, so mortal far in the south?" asked Biddy, over again.

"The two men looked hard at each other, before he that had spoken first said, 'We have a quare answer to that question, ma'am; for, though this *is* our first journey into Louth, as I tould you afore, and though the night fell on us just afther crossing the bounds of the next county, only a stone's throw from your snug house, we think we could describe every tree and bush of——'

"'Hushth, Aby!'" says the second man, taking the word out of his gossip's mouth.

"'Never fear, Dick,' Aby made answer, 'I'm not going to make a fool of myself, or you—every tree and bush, ma'am,' he went on, turning to the woman o' the house, 'and every thing in the world besides, of a certain spot, not very far from the spot we are talking on this blessed minute: it's a truth, sir,' he

repeated, nodding to the throoper, who, at his last words, raised up his eyes from the hearth to look at Aby.

“ ‘ Well, and that’s quare, of a sartainty, as you promised it would be, sir,’ says Biddy Murphy; ‘ ye got your knowledge of the spot ye mane, out of a book, I’m thinking?’

“ ‘ No, indeed, ma’am,’ says he.

“ ‘ Then ye saw it dhrawn out and painted in a pictur, and the name printed undher it?’ Biddy a second time demanded of the man.

“ ‘ Nor that, either upon my word and credit, ma’am,’ he replied to her.

“ ‘ But somebody that knew it well described it to ye, stock and stone, afore ye came—sure that must be it?’ says Misthress Murphy for the last time, very curious to find out, as ye may suppose.

“ ‘ No living tongue has ever made mention of it to us, ma’am!’ was all that Aby answered, only he spoke in a remarkable way, very slow, and half undher his breath.

“ ‘Blessed hour!’ cries Biddy, opening her mouth and her eyes at her two customers. The throoper also grumbled out something, and kept staring.

“ ‘Biddy,’ says the man of the house, handing her the pipe, ‘I’ll guess it for you. The two genteels saw the place in a dhrame, whatever place it is.

“ ‘Hoot-toot,’ grunted the throoper, shifting himself on his stool, and turning sideways to the company, eyes and all, mighty wise and scornful.

“ ‘The Lord save us!’ cries Biddy agin, while the two Kerry men only looked more and more serious.

“ ‘You may hoot us, sir,’ the husband went on to the throoper; ‘but I’ll lay you a small wager I am in the right—and, more than that, I’ll lay the same wager that the dhrame was about money being hid in the place, and that the two genteel have dhramt it together, over and over, and that they are come into Louth, to-night, to see their dhrame out.’

“ ‘ All nonsense, and turf and butter-milk,’ the throoper made answer, in words like my words, though may be not the very same, for I don’t pretend to spake his north bad English— ‘ and all come of the errors and superstitions of ould papistry.’ And he gave himself another swing round, and spoke down in his throat, and turned up his nose, like my lady’s lap-dog at could pee-aties. And, upon that, every sowl that heard him snapped at him, because they were all good Christians like ourselves, or had the name of it, at laste; and Biddy Murphy’s husband dared him to make the wager; and her two customers promised to decide it, by making oath of the truth one way or another; and she called him names, and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself; and at last, he consented, and wagered his sourd again two gould guineas that the Kerry men could not and would not uphold what Mike Murphy had said. So, the sourd and the money were put on the table together, and he swore the men

on a little Bible he took out of his pocket; and, sure enough, the sword was lost, for they made oath that every word Mike had spoken was gospel.

“ ‘Now, what’s the rason you don’t take it up, man o’ the house?’ says the throoper, speaking to Mike, who didn’t make the laste motion for the sourd, but only looked at it as a body would look at a live thing that might turn on a body, and bite. He thought he had a rason for keeping his hands to themselves—or, may be, two rasons. Biddy used to say that, first and foremost, he didn’t half like to meddle with it, and its gruff-looking owner to the fore, even supposing he had won it quite fair: but she used to say, besides, that he couth the Kerry men winking and smiling at one another, in a knowing way, just when they were going to kiss the little Bible; and, upon that, Mike wasn’t sure of them, out and out; and, moreover, he thought the throoper saw them doing the same thing, and had a maning in his words and look when he said—‘ What’s

the rason you don't take it up, man o' the house?"

" 'Never lāy a finger on it, Mike!' cried Biddy, as soon as the speech was out of his mouth—'Huth, sir,' facing herself about to the throoper, 'put your purty-sourd at your own side, where it ought to be—it's little use I or my good man has of such things; and sure it was all out of fun we laid the wager with you, and no more did we want than just to show you that Mither Murphy can make a sharp guess at a riddle now and then.' And Mike himself bid the throoper take it, saying the same words that Biddy said; and so he sthretched out his big long arm for it at last, with a grave kind of a smile on his own face, for the first time that evening.

"Very well. Ye must not think, genteels, that Mike Murphy had any doubt of the guess he made—no such thing: he believed firmly, and so did Biddy, that the Kerry men, Aby and Dick, as they called each other, had dhramt

the dhrame, and came into Louth to dig for the money; and when I said that he did not depend on them, out and out, for winning the wager, it was to give ye to understand that he feared they did not kiss the book right—only their thumbs, may be—that was all. Very well again. Mighty unasy he was to try if they would tell him whereabouts in the neighbourhood they expected to find the treasure; and so, giving a sign to Biddy—and Biddy wanted little asking—he got her to thry Aby on that head; but Aby was not entirely the fool she took him for; and all she had for her trouble was—‘Ah, ma’am!’ and sure that would be telling!’

“It was growing late, and the two men got up from the fire, as if going to shake themselves, and make ready for bed. The saddles of their horses lay in a corner where they had put them down; they took them on their arms, and stood awhile together, whispering. The throoper was nearer to them at that time than

the masther or the misthress of the Fighting Cocks; and it's said he heard a word or two, for all his not seeming to take notice. In a minute or so, Aby said to the other, spaking loud, 'Come up the loft with me, Dick, till we take care of the saddles, and then we'll settle who is to go out, and have a peep first.'

" 'It's talking of looking at the place, out of doors, they are,' says Biddy to Mike: and then she tould them not to be unasy about the saddles, for that they would be quite safe in the kitchen—as safe as if they put them undher their heads, for pillows, in the loft where they were to sleep. But they made answer, that the saddles did not belong to them; that they had borrowed them of a friend or two in Kerry; that they were new, and of value; and that they did not like, for the same rasons, to trust them out of their sight.

" 'Of great value they must be, surely,' says

the throoper, getting up, too, from his stool—
‘of great value to make you so careful of them;
I ought to know a good saddle from a bad one;
let me handle one of them;’—with that, he
whipt Dick’s saddle off his arm before any one
could hinder him: ‘And, şure enough,’ says
the throoper, says, he, ‘this is a serviceable
sort of a saddle; but what makes it so heavy,
I wondher!’

“ ‘Huth, that’s the virtue of it,’ answered
Dick, snapping it back again; and then he and
Aby went up the laddher to the loft, and
staid there a long while, whispering over
again.

“ No one had come down, when the throoper
said he would walk out a bit to sthretch his
long legs, afther his hard day’s ride, before
he went to bed. ‘He’s slipping out to lie in
wait for them, Mike,’ says Bidy to the hus-
band—‘let you step out, too, and who knows
but you might have a share of what’s going:’
and many a time she bid him thry his fortune;

but Mike Murphy was a quiet man, and staid where he was.

“ While they were talking under their breath, Dick ran bouldly down the laddher, and, looking pleasantly at them, and spaking as if he wanted to make no great secret of anything, except the real spot where the money was, said, ‘ Now for it !’ and darted out of the house. The man and wife sat at the fire, going on with their gosther. Aby soon made one among them agin. In a short half-hour’s time, Dick came in, rubbing his hands, and dancing about, now on one leg, now on another. ‘ You have found the place ?’ asked Aby.

“ ‘ The very place, sure enough,’ says Dick. ‘ And honest people, we’ll tell you. Lend us a spade, a crow, and a pick-axe, or borrow them for us from the neighbours, and wait here till we go try our luck—’twould be unmannerly for any one to follow us—and, according to what we may find, ye will be the

better of your civility.' And no sooner said than done: Mike and Biddy got the things they asked for in a jiffy, and out they went together, stripping off their coats and waistcoats to be ready for their work.

"For the hundredth time, ay, and more, Biddy wanted Mike to stale easy afther them; but she couldn't get him to stir. 'Well, then, salvation to me, but I'll have an eye afther them myself,' says she; and, putting on her cloak, she was as good as her word, sure enough, crossing the trassel, and leaving Mike alone at the fire.

"The place, above all others, nigh at hand, that a body would dhrame of finding money in, was an ould castle, built by the thieves of Danes the time they had all Ireland to themselves, before Brian Boru the Great dhruve them all into the sey at Clontarf, like a flock of half-starved wolves. And Biddy Murphy was not the woman to forget that same the moment she left her house, but sthraight away she bent

her steps to the ould four walls. Round about the narrow window-holes, and the low doorway, she went peeping like a cat; and it was asy for her to see the Kerry men inside on the ground floor. But they were not digging, and did not seem as if they were much in earnest about going to dig—not at all; but there they sat, side by side, on the big, loose stones that had tumbled in from the top of the castle, and the moon shining strong on them through the dourway: and Biddy thought they were only listening, as if to hear some footstep they expected might come, laughing low to one another, and looking very 'cute and knowledgeable all the time.

“ And at last she heard one of them say to the other, with a big curse—asking your pardon, genteels—‘ The hussey ! won’t she stale over here to watch us, afther all ? If she doesn’t, half our good plan fails.”

“ ‘ She will, man alive,’ the other made answer—‘ she’s the woman to do it, I tell you ;

he husband is a gom (ass)—but Biddy has the right curoosity in her.’

“ ‘ Thank ye kindly, gossips,’ says Biddy to herself, and faix ’t isn’t a bad guess ye have, no more than Mike Murphy: and so here goes to give ye a notion that I *am* here, but not that I know that *ye* know anything about it.’ For Biddy had it in her mind, in a minute, that they wanted her to see them rise the treasure, and be a witness for them that it was honestly dhramt of and come by. And with that she stirred her feet among the weeds and rubbish, outside o’ the ould place where she stood, so that they might hear her a little, which they did, at the same time, and then, with signs to each other, the two rogues of the world began to clear away the big stones, and to dig at last.

“ They were but a short time at work, when Aby cried out, as his spade sounded like music against something, ‘ Here it is, by the piper!’ and down they threw their spades, and began

to clear round the treasure with their pickaxes, and, one by one, they drew out of the earth a great many little tin cannisthers, like. ‘Goold in them all! goold in every one o’ them! and the whole lot full to the brim!’ they said, dancing like wild men, the same that Dick had done in the Fighting Cocks, according as they examined the little cannisthers one afther another—‘Goold enough to make rich men and gentlemen of us, for ever and a day!’ They went on, ‘Goold enough to buy a nate bite of land out of ould Ireland’s ground!’

“ ‘Yes,’ said some one else that Biddy did not see at first—‘Yes, but not for ye!’—and behold ye, genteels, with that the big throoper came jumping down upon them, from a hiding-hole in the ould wall of the room, or whatever we are to call it, and his sword in his hand, and his cross face, now looking terrible entirely. Down he jumped, and rattled, jack-boots, spurs and all, among the loose stones; and the first thing he made bould to do was to

split poor Aby's skull to the chin, before any one could say—'Don't, sir, and I'll be obliged to you.'

"Biddy was going to screech murder, as loud as she could, when something flew, whistling,—for all the world as if one of the good people (fairies) did it—by her ear and stopt her breath; and to tell the truth, she was more and more frightened at the noise of a gun or a pistol going off, entirely at the same time: for it came into her mind that it was the bullet she heard so close by her ear, and that she had what might be called a great escape, for the same rason; and the second Kerry man fired the shot, sure enough, at the throoper, thinking to have revenge for his gossip's death, only he missed his mark, somehow;—and he dhrew another pistol from his bosom, and presented it, when the throoper knocked it out of his hand, and then they closed and had a brave wrastling match.

"Biddy now found her voice, and pillalooed,

and clapt her hands, and danced on her heels, at the narrow window-hole, enough to bring down the remains of the ould castle on all their heads, though she had not the thought, nor maybe the strength, to do a better thing by far, that is, run home to Mike Murphy.

“ ‘Hould your tongue, woman!’ cries the throoper to her, roaring all the time that he was shaking the Kerry-man, like a dog worrying a rat—‘ hould your foolish bastely tongue, and come in here to us!—I am glad you came in time to bear witness.’

“ ‘Musha, and I’m in great request with you one after another, for bearing witness,’ says Biddy; ‘and what good can I do *you*, misther throoper, by giving a true account of what I have seen?’

“ ‘Come in, and you shall learn,’ he grumbled, and in speaking these words he got the Kerry-man on his back, and was strapping his arms behind him.

“ ‘Come in?’ asked Biddy—‘come in to you,

to be murdered, as you are afther doing to one of my honest civil customers, and are going to do wid the other?"

"‘Fool of a woman!’ roars the throoper, madder than ever—‘you do not know what you say;—but I care little, so you listen to me, and heed me. The man I have cut down with my sword was a great highway robber, and so is the man who lies bound at my feet. For many years they have pursued their bad calling in the south; nor are their hands clane of the blood of some of the people they plundered. They had gained a power of riches by their evil deeds, and thought to leave Ireland with it, and live like grandees in a foreign counthry. But the government, and the great gentlemen of the south, hearing of their plan, sent descriptions of them, printed, all over Ireland, and to every port where they could take shipping, in particular; so that after many attempts, they gave up their notion of going abroad, and laid another plan to enjoy their riches at home. And

it was this last plan that sent them into Louth, a good distance from every place where they were well-known, and set them upon inventing their story of the dhrame, at your fire-side.'

" ' Blessed hour, sir !' says Biddy, spaking in through the split in the ould wall—' but how did you come to know all this? and did not they find the threasure nigh to the spot you are standing on, at any rate?'

" ' He that hides can find,' the throoper made answer. ' Before they left your home together, for this place, one of them came here alone, and put the goold into the ground, and haped stones over it. I saw him at the work. Ay, and I suspected his intent before he quitted your roof.'

" ' You did, sir, did you?' asked Biddy again.

" ' I did; and from the moment that I took his saddle in my hand, too, for it was almost as heavy as so much lead, by rason of the goold that was hid in it. Ask me any other question

you like,' he went on spaking in a very slow, determined voice—'any other questions; but be quick, my business must be finished.'

" 'Why, then, it's only what I asked you before, sir,' says Biddy.

" 'That is,' says he, taking the word from her, 'how have I come to know all the rest I have told you: you shall learn. Afther the man, who now lies dead, had concaled the goold, he went back for his comrade, and I remained where I was till they came side by side, carrying their spades, and other things. Here they sat down to wait for you; and from their discoorse together, I larned who and what they were: and the hopes they had that, upheld by your evidence, the fable of their having found the money, by virtue of a dhrame, might pass current in your supperdishous neighbourhood. I also recollected a description of them, which I had often read in the printed hue and cry raised afther them, and not a doubt was left on my mind. When my part was soon taken.

You have seen me go half through with it. Having to face two bould men, both well armed, of coorse, I knew that it behoved me to rid myself of one of them at the first blow.'

" ' And so you did, sir, to a sartainty—but who does the threasure come to?' says Biddy.

" ' To me!—fool, I call you agin, for asking!'—cries the throoper. ' Do you think a single man will dare what I have dared for nothing? Larn that the proclamation made for taking these men gives all the money found in their hands to the person who does its bidding on them, dead or alive, ay, and a good reward besides. And so you may tell whom you like, that you have seen me gether up my own;' and saying these words, he stooped down, sure enough, and put the little cannisthers into his pockets, one afther another, as many as twenty of them. ' *You* are looking at me, too,' he says again, turning his eyes on the sham Kerry-man, who, to tell the truth, was watching him mighty close;—' but ' Ill got, ill gone,' you

know, comarade. And come, now, stand on your legs, and walk with me down to the village, till we can see about sending you to be well looked afther ; help me, woman, to lift him.'

" Biddy, none afeard, did as he bid her ; her mind not at all asy on the head of which of them was the real robber, and which not. But the throoper's story turned out to be true enough. The man he had bound was sent to jail, put on his thrial, and hanged, upon the oaths of many who knew him well, and there was no law to take a single gould piece from the throoper ; but, as he tould Biddy it would happen, he got more and more riches and the greatest of praise, and who but he from that day out. And, now, genteels, ye'll be guessing the throoper's name, afore I tell it to ye ; and sure enough it was M'Cass ; the very M'Cass that bought all the land in these parts, and was the great Square M'Cass among us. And ' Ill got, ill gone,' was his word to the bould highwayman ; but men and women are now living

that can say the same word of himself; for, afther the first spurt of his good luck, nothing went right with him; he soon became a struggling man, canting (selling) and dhriving, early and late, to make both ends meet for the keeping up of his big house, and his hounds, and his horses, and his ladies. Ay, and a sorrowful man he was, too; without wife or child, kith or kin, true friend or kind neighbour; and so he spent his life, and so he died; in poverty he was put into the ground, without any christian show of a funeral, without a tongue to *keenth* (wail) him, or a hand to fix a stone at his head; and people have it, that the night he departed, Square M'Cass talked as if the man he cut down in the ould castle was sitting by his bed-side; and that the last saying heard from his lips was his own saying of ould—‘Ill got, ill gone—Ill got, ill gone’—repeated over and over, till he was stiff.”

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